



May 10, 2018

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the more than 170,000 bipartisan members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I write to urge you to cosponsor the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (H.R. 947), the Healthy Families Act (H.R. 1516), and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (H.R. 2417). Together, this package of bills would provide the policies and protections necessary for workers to manage the demands of job and family. For working mothers in particular, these bills are critical and this Mother's Day, AAUW urges you to cosponsor them.

AAUW is committed to increasing the availability of and access to high standard of benefits and policies that promote work-life balance, which are critical to achieve economic self-sufficiency for all women.<sup>1</sup> Nationwide, 48.9 million individuals provide care for an adult family member, such as an aging parent, or friend and more than 70 percent of those care recipients are over the age of 50.<sup>2</sup> In addition, more than 22 million working women do not have paid sick days,<sup>3</sup> and as a result more than half of working mothers report that they must miss work and often go without pay when caring for a sick child.<sup>4</sup> Only 15 percent of workers in the United States have access to paid family leave through their employers, often jeopardizing their family's economic security.<sup>5</sup> In addition, despite existing protections, pregnant workers still face discrimination, often denied reasonable accommodations that would enable them to continue working and supporting their families. It is time to take action to ensure all employees, but particularly women and families, receive the necessary work place protections to meet the demands of their health, the health of their families, and the obligations of work.

A federal paid leave program will build stronger families, healthier workers, and successful businesses. The FAMILY Act (H.R. 947) would provide workers with up to 12 weeks of partial income replacement when they take time off for serious health conditions or caregiving purposes. The income replacement would amount to 66 percent of an individual's monthly wages, up to a capped amount for high-wage earners. The FAMILY Act (H.R. 947) would cover workers in all companies, no matter the size, and would be funded by small employee and employer payroll contributions of two-tenths of one percent each, or about \$1.50 per week for the average worker. Paid family and medical leave makes it possible for parents to participate in the workforce and strengthens the economic security of families. The FAMILY Act (H.R. 947) is a much needed next step toward supporting families and building successful businesses.

Working parents and caregivers often face an impossible decision when having to choose between caring for loved ones—or themselves—or losing much-needed income. The Healthy Families Act (H.R. 1516) would ensure workers in businesses with 15 or more employees can earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days each year to be used to recover from their own illness, access preventive care, or provide care for a sick family member. When workers have access to paid sick days, they are able to care for themselves and are less likely to send sick children to school or to daycare, thereby reducing

the potential of making others sick and unnecessary health care costs.<sup>6</sup> These provisions are particularly important for low-wage workers who often have to make tough decisions, including jeopardizing their employment, or going to work while ill. The Healthy Families Act (H.R. 1516) would ensure that working families can meet their health and financial needs while improving productivity and strengthening the economy.

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (H.R. 2417) would ensure that pregnant workers are not forced out of their jobs unnecessarily or denied reasonable accommodations that would allow them to keep working and supporting their families. This bill, which is modeled after the Americans with Disabilities Act, addresses this discrimination through a similar “reasonable accommodations” framework. This legislation prevents employers from forcing pregnant women out of the workforce and ensures that, when a minor job modification – like having a chair or water available – would allow a woman to continue working, an employer must provide it, unless doing so would pose an undue hardship. Pregnant women who are denied such reasonable accommodations must either choose between their own health or the jobs and income they need. The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (H.R. 2417) will ensure equal opportunity for working women which is vital to the economic security of our nation’s families.

Working families need additional support and protections in the workplace. The Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (H.R. 947), the Healthy Families Act (H.R. 1516), and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (H.R. 2417) together take the necessary steps toward build stronger families, healthier workers, and successful businesses. We urge the Representative to cosponsor these three bills.

Cosponsorship and votes associated with these bills may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Records for the 115th Congress*. Please do not hesitate to contact Anne Hedgepeth, interim vice president of public policy and government relations, at 202/785-7724, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Deborah J. Vagins  
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Research

---

<sup>1</sup> AAUW. (2017). *AAUW Public Policy Priorities*. [www.aauw.org/resource/principles-and-priorities](http://www.aauw.org/resource/principles-and-priorities).

<sup>2</sup> National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP. (2009) Executive Summary. *Caregiving in the U.S.: Findings From the National Caregiver Survey*. [www.caregiving.org/data/CaregivingUSAllAgesExecSum.pdf](http://www.caregiving.org/data/CaregivingUSAllAgesExecSum.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Women’s Policy Research. (2017). *Women and Paid Sick Days: Crucial for Family Well-Being*. [iwpr.org/publications/women-and-paid-sick-days-crucial-for-family-well-being](http://iwpr.org/publications/women-and-paid-sick-days-crucial-for-family-well-being).

<sup>4</sup> Institute for Women’s Policy Research. (2011). *Paid Sick Day Access Rates by Gender and Race/Ethnicity*. [iwpr.org/publications/paid-sick-day-access-rates-by-gender-and-raceethnicity-2010](http://iwpr.org/publications/paid-sick-day-access-rates-by-gender-and-raceethnicity-2010).

<sup>5</sup> National Partnership for Women and Families. (2017). *Issues and Campaigns: Paid Leave*. [www.nationalpartnership.org/issues/work-family/paid-leave.html](http://www.nationalpartnership.org/issues/work-family/paid-leave.html).

<sup>6</sup> Smith, T.W., & Kim, J. (June 2010). *Paid Sick Days: Attitudes and Experiences*. National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago for the Public Welfare Foundation. [www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/psd/paid-sick-days-attitudes-and-experiences.pdf](http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/psd/paid-sick-days-attitudes-and-experiences.pdf).