



September 4, 2025

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the 100,000 members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), **I urge you to support and be an original cosponsor of the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act.** The FAMILY Act would create a national paid leave program allowing workers to care for themselves and their loved ones, without the fear of making ends meet. Such a program would not only help workers but also benefit families, businesses, and our nation's economy.

The current system falls short when workers need time off to address serious health issues and care for either themselves or their loved ones. Only 27% of workers have access to paid family leave through their employers, and just 43% have access to personal medical leave through an employer-provided short-term disability program.¹ In addition to this, the job-protected unpaid leave provided through the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) only covers 56% of the workforce, leaving behind workers who work for small employers, do not work enough hours, and/or have not worked for their employer for a sufficient period.² Even if they were to qualify for FMLA, some workers cannot afford to take unpaid leave. The lack of a national paid leave program forces many Americans to make an impossible choice between addressing health concerns and protecting their financial security.

Inability to access paid leave disproportionately impacts women and people of color. Women shoulder an unfair caregiving burden due to societal norms, increasing their likelihood of needing leave, regardless of whether it's paid or unpaid. Women with less education, lower wages, or employed part-time or seasonally tend to have the least access to paid leave. In states without paid leave programs, women of color are disproportionately unable to take unpaid FMLA leave: 42% of the leave needed by Native American women, 38% by Black women and Latinas, 34% by white women, and 32% by Asian women.³

The creation of a federal paid leave program would immensely support the American family structure by reducing economic insecurity, increasing workforce participation and retention,

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2024." September 2024. <https://www.bls.gov/ebs/publications/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2024.htm>. (See Excel tables, Civilian workers, Short term disability); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2023." September 2023. <https://www.bls.gov/ebs/publications/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2023.htm>. (See Excel tables, Civilian workers, Leave).

² National Partnership for Women & Families. "Key Facts: The Family and Medical Leave Act." February 2025. <https://nationalpartnership.org/report/fmla-key-facts/>.

³ Ibid.



improving the health outcomes of both children and adults, and protecting retirement funds.⁴ The program would add \$775 billion to the U.S. GDP through the participation of women in the labor force at similar rates to other developed countries⁵, and nearly eight in ten small business owners already show support for a paid leave plan like the FAMILY Act.⁶

The FAMILY Act would provide a comprehensive solution by creating a national program that helps workers stay financially secure while meeting essential caregiving needs and responsibilities. It would:

- Provide workers with up to 12 weeks of partial income replacement when they take time off for serious health conditions or caregiving purposes.
- Expand the definition of “family” to ensure a broader range of caregiving relationships are covered, not only for a parent, child, or spouse, but also for extended family members such as step-parents, in-laws, grandparents/grandchildren, and domestic partners.
- Cover all workers, regardless of company size, including part-time and self-employed workers.
- Establish a new Office of Paid Family and Medical Leave within the Social Security Administration to oversee the administration of the program.

I urge you to become an **original cosponsor of the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act** by contacting John Myron (John.Myron@mail.house.gov) in Rep. Rosa DeLauro’s office. Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record* for the 119th Congress. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-728-3300 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Meghan Kissell".

Meghan Kissell
Senior Director, Policy & Member Advocacy

⁴ National Partnership for Women & Families. *The Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act*. Fact Sheet. 2025. <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/family-act-fact-sheet.pdf>.

⁵ Sarah Jane Glynn. *The Cost of Doing Nothing, 2023 Update: The Price We STILL Pay without Policies to Support Working Families*. Women’s Bureau, United States Department of Labor, 2023. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6536b8dab487e203ecaa28ae/t/67c7b3ff09741d60c3f6fc6c/1741140991792/Th](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6536b8dab487e203ecaa28ae/t/67c7b3ff09741d60c3f6fc6c/1741140991792/The+Cost+of+Do.)

⁶ National Partnership for Women & Families. “Small Businesses Support a National Paid Family and Medical Leave Program.” October 2024. <https://nationalpartnership.org/report/small-businesses-support-national-paid-family-medical-leave-program/>.