



Called to Care: A Racially Just Recovery Demands Paid Family and Medical Leave

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand: “The pandemic has laid bare the economic inequalities in our country - hitting communities of color, particularly women of color, disproportionately hard when they lack the benefits and resources to stay home safely,” said U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. “Far too many Americans have had to make the impossible decision between caring for themselves and their families or earning a paycheck because we do not have national paid sick days and paid family and medical leave policy. Establishing a permanent, comprehensive paid family and medical leave program would be an essential tool to address these economic inequalities and help our country recover from the pandemic.”

Rep. Rosa DeLauro: “The pandemic has exposed racial and gender inequities that have existed long before the spread of COVID-19. Without job-protected paid family and medical leave, people of color, particularly women, have been disproportionately forced to choose between their job or paycheck and their health or the health of their family members. As a result, they have been hit harder by the health and economic impacts of the pandemic and face greater hurdles to recovery. I thank the National Partnership for Women & Families for their work to amplify this issue and provide the data to further support our work in Congress to pass legislation to make permanent paid family and medical leave. The data is there, and Congress must act.”

Sen. Cory Booker: “The coronavirus pandemic has not only exposed but also exacerbated the deep, structural racial inequities within our economy,” said Senator Booker. “It is shameful that the wealthiest nation in the world does not guarantee paid sick and family leave for workers, a failure that disproportionately harms women and families of color. Enacting a national paid leave program is essential to helping our country and every community to recover and rebuild – and to finally end injustices that have persisted for far too long in our country.”

Sen. Tammy Duckworth: “To truly build back better, we cannot ignore women—particularly women of color—in our economic recovery,” said Senator Tammy Duckworth. “Paid leave is an essential component of that work. Each of us can attest, either in our own lives or through friends and family, to the incredible burdens that have been placed on mothers and parents during this pandemic, and the disproportionate impacts these economic challenges have had on women of color. Paid leave is not only necessary, it is owed. I applaud the National Partnership for Women & Families for their work on this issue, and I look forward to partnering in the fight to secure this vital policy change.”



Sen. Bob Menendez: "Many years ago, my mother, a Latina seamstress and the hardest working person I've known, suffered from inequality in the workplace. She was paid less than her male counterparts, just as many other women and people of color were and still are today," said Sen. Menendez. "It is distressing, but not surprising, that women and workers of color are harmed most by not having a national plan that provides paid sick days and paid family and medical leave for all. This pandemic has only exacerbated this already unacceptable situation, and I remain committed to erasing these inequalities and improving the working conditions for all people, especially women and people of color, as our country continues to recover. I thank the National Partnership for Women & Families for their critical work and advocacy."

Sen. Ron Wyden: "No one should have to choose between keeping their job and taking care of their kids or a sick family member, especially in the middle of a global pandemic that has widened the wealth gap between the rich and essential workers who put their lives on the line to keep our economy afloat. And because of deep-rooted systemic racism, it's communities of color, particularly women, who have felt the brunt of that inequity," Chairman Wyden said. "Equity for women and families, in this pandemic and beyond, means establishing national paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave programs, and I am hard at work to push those policies across the finish line. Thank you to the National Partnership for keeping this important issue in focus as we work to add to the wins of the American Rescue Plan and set our nation up for a more equitable post-pandemic economy."

Rep. Joyce Beatty: "The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the longstanding systemic racial and gender inequities that disproportionately impact the lives and livelihoods of women and communities of color," Beatty said. "As Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, I am calling on Congress to pass a national paid family and medical leave program to provide a level of certainty to countless hardworking Americans and their families during these uncertain times."

Rep. Judy Chu: "The Coronavirus pandemic has exposed glaring inequalities in our country. Especially in communities of color. Those we most depend on to run the country in essential jobs are often those least likely to have access to things like paid leave that allow them to take care of themselves or their family without losing pay. We must ensure our relief responds to meet the needs of all communities and closes these gaps."



Rep. Jimmy Gomez: "The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed how existing systemic barriers work against the economic security and health of working families nationwide, especially that of working families of color," said Congressman Gomez, Co-Chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means' Racial Equity Initiative. "We need to seize the opportunity before us to fundamentally rebuild our economy by implementing policies to uplift historically marginalized and underserved communities. Transforming our country's economy won't be an easy task, but we have a moral imperative as elected representatives to ensure every American – including those who stock our grocery stores, run our public services, and pick the food we eat – won't be forced to choose between their health and their jobs. I'd like to extend my appreciation to the National Partnership for Women & Families for their steadfast leadership on this important issue as we work together to finally secure paid family and sick leave for all."

Rep. Steven Horsford: "The COVID-19 public health crisis has thrown our nation's inequities into sharp focus and illustrated the deadly effects of unequal access to paid leave," said Congressman Steven Horsford. "As Co-Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee's Racial Equity Initiative, I strongly support paid leave for all Americans, which will accelerate our recovery from the pandemic. Establishing paid family and medical leave programs can address the health and economic inequities experienced by people of color throughout the United States."

Rep. Richard Neal: "The choice between caring for a loved one or paying your bills is an impossible choice that no one in this country should be forced to make. Yet, American working families face this reality all too frequently, and sadly, people of color and women do at disproportionate rates," said Chairman Richard E. Neal (D-MA). "Systemic racism and sexism have created gaps in wages, economic opportunities, and access to family supports and services that persistently lead to higher rates of poverty and unemployment among people of color and women – creating a cycle of inequity across generations. These inequities have only been exacerbated by the pandemic, and the Ways and Means Committee understands that access to available and affordable child care and paid leave are vital parts of closing these gaps and getting hard-working Americans back on their feet. We fought to include provisions in the American Rescue Plan, and will continue working toward permanent equitable policy changes for future generations."



Rep. Ayanna Pressley: “This report underscores what our community members have been telling us throughout this crisis – the glaring lack of paid leave across the nation has caused families from every walk of life hardship and for our communities of color this has led to deep disparities when it comes to their health and their ability to make ends meet,” said Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley. “Paid leave is a public health, gender, racial and economic justice issue, and including robust and permanent paid leave protections must be a priority in our next COVID relief package.”

Rep. Raul Ruiz: “The health and economic devastation has disproportionately impacted Hispanic families and Hispanic women. Millions of Hispanic high-risk essential workers, regardless of immigration status, have stood strong to help feed and keep America safe during the COVID-19 pandemic while bearing the brunt of infections and deaths. These essential workers are the backbone of our country, yet they are least likely to have access to benefits like paid leave that would allow them to take care of themselves or their loved ones when they fall ill. Paid family and medical leave can be life changing to the economic well-being and health of Hispanic families. As CHC Chair, I will work with my colleagues to ensure we pass a national paid family and medical leave program, which is critical for a just and equitable recovery.”

Rep. Terri Sewell: “As Co-Chair of the Racial Equity Initiative on the House Committee on Ways and Means, I remain focused on prioritizing paid family and medical leave, which will be essential to an equitable national recovery from the pandemic,” said Rep. Terri Sewell. “As we seek to address the longstanding economic and health inequities across our country, it is critical we do so by looking at all indicators of racial injustice, particularly the consequences of the absence of a national paid leave program that have disproportionately created greater economic insecurity for people of color.”

Read the full report at NationalPartnership.org/CalledToCare