

Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act

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The birth or adoption of a child should be the most joyous of occasions. But for millions of Americans, this happy time is marred by impossible choices between caring for their new children and keeping their families financially secure. Federal workers are among those who do not have paid parental leave. **Being forced to forego a paycheck to care for a new child puts a terrible burden on federal workers and their families – and as a result, the federal government and taxpayers suffer.**

Supporting a Family Friendly Federal Workforce

As the nation's largest employer, with more than 1.8 million employees throughout the country, the federal government should be a leader in establishing family friendly workplace policies.

Most people are surprised to learn that the federal government does not currently provide *any* paid parental leave for its employees.

The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act (H.R. 517) would provide four weeks of paid time off to use for the birth or adoption of a new child for federal workers who qualify for Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act would not provide employees with additional leave time; it would simply allow new parents – both fathers and mothers – to receive pay during a portion of their 12 weeks of FMLA leave.

Providing paid parental leave would save the government money by reducing turnover costs and would help the federal government employers recruit and retain talented workers.

Saving Money for the Federal Government and Retaining Valued Workers

Providing paid parental leave will save the government an estimated \$50 million per year in turnover and replacement costs.¹

- ▶ Worker turnover declines and loyalty increases when workers are able to use paid leave to care for a new child. First-time mothers with access to paid maternity leave are more likely to return to work after the birth of their child.²

- ▶ Retaining workers saves money because replacing them is expensive. Turnover costs are estimated to be between 25 and 200 percent of a worker's annual salary.³
- ▶ The federal government could prevent the departure of 2,650 female employees per year by offering paid parental leave.⁴

Paid parental leave would help the federal government attract and retain valuable and much-needed younger workers.

- ▶ The federal workforce is aging. More than two-thirds of federal employees are older than 40, and 40 percent are older than 50.⁵ Even in this economy, the exodus of baby boomer workers will create a recruitment challenge for the federal government.
- ▶ Paid parental leave appeals to younger workers who are less likely to have accrued significant amounts of sick or vacation time and will be more likely than older workers to be forced to choose between their paychecks and caring for their newborn or newly adopted children.

Offering paid parental leave will help the federal government compete with the private sector for top talent.

- ▶ Nearly all Fortune 100 firms offer working parents paid time off when they have a new child.⁶ In order to attract the best and brightest talent, the federal government should provide comparable benefits.

Paid parental leave is critical for the health and well-being of families.

- ▶ Enabling working mothers and fathers to care for and bond with a new baby lays the foundation for healthy child development. Children who form strong emotional bonds or “attachment” with their parents are most likely to do well in school, have positive relationships with others, and enjoy good health during their lifetimes.

1 Miller, K., Suppan Helmuth, A., & Farabee-Siers, R. (2009). *The Need for Paid Parental Leave for Federal Employees: Adapting to a Changing Workforce*. Institute for Women's Policy Research Publication. Retrieved 29 January 2013, from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-need-for-paid-parental-leave-for-federal-employees-adapting-to-a-changing-workforce-1>

2 Laughlin, Lynda. (2011, October). *Maternity Leave and Employment Patterns of First-Time Mothers: 1961-2008*. Current Population Report. Retrieved 6 February 2013, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p70-128.pdf>

3 Sasha Corporation. (2007, January). *Compilation of Turnover Cost Studies*. Retrieved 29 January 2013, from <http://www.sashacorp.com/turnframe.html>

4 See note 1.

5 Copeland, Curtis. (2011, April 19). *The Federal Workforce: Characteristics and Trends*. Congressional Research Service Report. Retrieved 04 February 2013, from http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34685_20110419.pdf

6 Joint Economic Committee Majority Staff. (2008, March). *Paid Family Leave at Fortune 100 Companies: A Basic Standard but Still Not the Gold Standard*. Joint Economic Committee Publication. Retrieved 04 February 2013, from <http://jec.senate.gov/archive/Documents/Reports/03.05.08PaidFamilyLeave.pdf>