

FMLA25 Toolkit for Capitol Hill Partners

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Messaging Guidance

Topline Messaging – More Than a Moment: Celebrating the Movement to Advance Gender Equality and Win Paid Leave for All

As the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) turns 25, the country is in the midst of an extraordinary, long-overdue reckoning about gender equality and respect. To secure a future in which all women and all people can live and work with dignity, we need policies that value women and care – including, at last, paid family and medical leave.

Paid leave means busting stereotypes about jobs, family and care that hold women and working people back. It means recognizing that our businesses and economy are stronger when people can care and provide for themselves and their families while keeping their jobs. It means respecting the diversity of families and care needs. It means protecting the health and economic well-being of working people, families and communities.

It is past time to fulfill the FMLA’s promise of more equitable and family friendly workplaces. This is more than a moment. It’s a movement for real change in how women are treated – and putting a real national paid leave policy in place is essential to winning the fight.

Talking Points:

- August 5 is the 25th anniversary of the implementation of the Family and Medical Leave Act, or the FMLA, which established the right for most workers to take unpaid time off without losing their job to care for a new child, a seriously ill or injured loved one, their own serious health issue or to address military family care needs.
- The FMLA was an important first step toward transforming our workplaces and our culture. But too often, working people – especially those who struggle the most to make ends meet – still must choose between their health or the health of a family member and a paycheck. In fact, 62 percent of workers nationwide and ## percent in my state of [STATE] are either ineligible to take unpaid leave or can’t afford to.
<<Note: State numbers are on fact sheets here:
NationalPartnership.org/PaidLeaveMeansMap>>
- Twenty-five years after the passage of the FMLA, it is clear that unpaid leave is not enough. Paid family and medical leave strengthens families and supports public health and child development. It helps employers recruit and retain valued employees, benefitting businesses and our economy.

- Inclusive, comprehensive paid family and medical leave supports workplace equity and economic security for women, LGBTQ workers, people with disabilities, low-income workers – who are disproportionately people of color – and all working people.
- It is past time to fulfill the promise of the FMLA by securing a strong, real national paid family and medical leave policy.
- **[If cosponsor of the FAMILY Act]:** That's why I am a cosponsor of the Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act, which would create a sustainable, affordable, inclusive national paid family and medical leave plan. The FAMILY Act would provide security when working people need time to care for a new child, a seriously ill or injured loved one, their own serious health issue or to address military family care needs.
- On the FMLA's 25th anniversary, I call on my colleagues in Congress to take the next step and pass the FAMILY Act, so that Americans no longer have to make impossible choices between their jobs and their families.

State-Specific Talking Points:

- The FMLA inspired state and local lawmakers and private sector employers to do better, including in my state of **[STATE]**, where workers have access to paid family leave.
 - California: California is home to the first paid family leave insurance program in the United States. Since 2004, California's working people have been able to take paid family leave to care for new children or seriously ill loved ones for up to six weeks with some pay. California's paid leave plan demonstrates that progress is possible – and that there is a common sense, tested approach that works for families, businesses and economies. In fact, California has expanded its law to recognize the diversity of extended families, to increase benefit levels for lower-income workers and to add job protection for new parents.
 - District of Columbia: Washington, D.C. is the first city to enact a paid family and medical leave insurance program and the first program built without the infrastructure of an already existing temporary disability insurance program. Passed in 2017, the paid leave program takes effect in 2020 and will provide eight weeks of paid parental leave, six weeks of paid family care leave and two weeks of paid medical leave. The District will soon add to the growing body of evidence that paid leave programs work – and that there is a common sense, tested approach that works for families, businesses and economies.
 - New Jersey: New Jersey is home to the second state paid family and medical leave program in the United States. Since 2009, New Jersey's working people have been able to take paid family leave to care for new children or seriously ill loved ones for up to six weeks with some pay. New Jersey's paid leave plan demonstrates that progress is possible – and that there is a common sense,

tested approach that works for families, businesses and economies. I'm proud that New Jersey is on the cusp of expanding its law to make leave more affordable and substantial for working families.

- New York: New York is home to the fourth state paid family and medical leave program in the United States. New York's paid leave program took effect on January 1, 2018, allowing working people to take paid family leave to care for new children or seriously ill loved ones for up to eight weeks with some pay – and will provide 12 weeks at 2/3 of their usual pay when fully phased in in 2021. New York will soon add to the growing body of evidence that paid leave programs work – and that there is a common sense, tested approach that works for families, businesses and economies.
- Rhode Island: Rhode Island is home to the third state paid family and medical leave program in the United States. Since 2014, Rhode Island's working people have been able to take paid family leave to care for new children or seriously ill loved ones for up to four weeks with some pay. Rhode Island's paid leave plan demonstrates that progress is possible – and that there is a common sense, tested approach that works for families, businesses and economies.
- Washington: Washington state will soon be home to the fifth state paid family and medical leave program in the United States. With bipartisan support, Washington state enacted a comprehensive paid family and medical leave law in 2017 with substantial bipartisan support and engagement from larger and smaller businesses, worker and children's advocates and more. When fully phased in in 2020, the program will provide 12 weeks paid family leave and 12 weeks paid medical leave, including pregnancy – capped at 16 weeks per year – with two additional weeks for pregnancy-related medical complications. Washington will soon add to the growing body of evidence that paid leave programs work – and that there is a common sense, tested approach that works for families, businesses and economies.
- But, people's access to paid leave shouldn't depend on where they live or work or what job they hold. A paid leave policy for the nation would build on state models, and would create a stronger economy, healthier families and businesses, greater equity regardless of a person's job and more workplace equality for women.

Key Facts:

- The United States is one of only two countries in the world among 187 surveyed by the International Labor Organization to offer no paid maternity leave, the other being Papua New Guinea. Among developed OECD nations, the United States is the only country that does not guarantee paid maternity leave, one of four (Ireland, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States) that does not offer paid parental or paternity leave to new fathers, and one of two that does not guarantee workers paid sick leave (South Korea is the other).

- America's paid leave gaps – inadequate access to paid parental leave, family care or personal medical leave – costs U.S. families nearly \$21 billion per year in lost wages.¹
- 85 percent of the U.S. workforce – more than 100 million people – have jobs that do not offer paid family leave to care for a new child or a family member with a serious illness. More than 60 percent of the workforce does not have employer-provided temporary disability insurance to deal with the physical impacts of pregnancy or a serious illness requiring time away from work.²
- Only 50 percent of first-time mothers take any paid time off after childbirth. For women without a high school diploma, that drops to less than 20 percent – the same share as in 1961.³
- Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of U.S. women are back at work within two weeks of giving birth.⁴ Ninety-five percent of men take less than 2 weeks of paternity leave.⁵ This affects child and maternal health, child attachment to parents and gender equity within households.⁶
- Nearly half (48 percent) of family members providing care to older parents or family members take time off take unpaid time and lose income.⁷
- When sons and daughters over the age of 50 leave the workforce to provide care for their mom or dad, they lose, on average, nearly \$304,000 in earnings and retirement savings – and for daughters it is worse - \$324,000.⁸
- Paid leave for women and men – for parental and family care leave – helps shrink the gender-based wage gap. Without intervention, the gap in median wages between women and men who work full-time, year-round isn't expected to close until 2059.⁹ Black women lose close to \$900,000 and Latina women lose more than \$1 million over their lifetimes to the wage gap.¹⁰
- Paid leave boosts women's economic equality and GDP. Increasing women's labor force participation could add as much as five percent to the U.S. GDP – hundreds of

¹ Corley, D., & Glynn, S.J. (2016, September 22). *The Cost of Work-Family Policy Inaction*. Center for American Progress Publication. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2016/09/22/143877/the-cost-of-inaction/>

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2017, September). *National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2017*. (Tables 16 and 32). Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2017/ebbl0061.pdf>

³ Laughlin, L. (2011, October). *Maternity Leave and Employment Patterns of First-Time Mothers: 1961-2008*. U.S. Census Bureau Publication. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p70-128.pdf>

⁴ Lerner, S. (2015, August 18). "The Real War on Families: Why the U.S. Needs Paid Leave Now." *In These Times*. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <http://inthesetimes.com/article/18151/the-real-war-on-families>

⁵ Harrington, B., et al. (2011). *The New Dad: Caring, Committed and Conflicted*. Boston College Center for Work & Family Publication. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/research/publications/researchreports/The%20New%20Dad%202011_Caring%20Committed%20and%20Conflicted

⁶ ZEROTOTHREE, & National Partnership for Women & Families. (2017, January). *The Child Development Case for a National Paid Family and Medical Leave Program*. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/paid-leave/the-child-development-case-for-a-national-paid-family-and-medical-leave-insurance-program.pdf>

⁷ Aumann, K., et al. (2010, October). *The Elder Care Study: Everyday Realities and Wishes for Change*. Families and Work Institute Publication. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <http://familiesandwork.org/downloads/TheElderCareStudy.pdf>

⁸ MetLife Mature Market Institute. (2011, June). *The MetLife Study of Caregiving Costs to Working Caregivers: Double Jeopardy for Baby Boomers Caring for Their Parents*. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <https://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/2011/Caregiving-Costs-to-Working-Caregivers.pdf>

⁹ Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2017, November 1). *Women's Median Earnings as a Percent of Men's, 1985-2016 (Full-time, Year-Round Workers) with Projections for Pay Equity, by Race/Ethnicity*. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <https://iwpr.org/publications/womens-median-earnings-percent-mens-1985-2016-full-time-year-round-workers-projections-pay-equity-raceethnicity/>

¹⁰ National Women's Law Center. (2017, March). *Women and the Lifetime Wage Gap: How Many Woman Years Does it Take to Equal 40 Man Years?* Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Women-and-the-Lifetime-Wage-Gap-2017-1.pdf>

billions of dollars annually for the country and thousands in extra income for families.¹¹

- The U.S. population is aging – the number of people over age 65 is expected to double to 98 million people by 2060.¹² Already, 43.5 million people provide unpaid care to family members and most of those people also have paying jobs.¹³
- Companies that offer paid leave see payoffs in retention. Businesses pay, on average, anywhere from 16 percent to more than 200 percent of a worker’s annual salary to replace them.¹⁴
- Four states – California, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island – have paid family and medical laws in place, and Washington state and Washington, D.C. will have new laws in place by 2020.¹⁵ But, without more progress, that means people in 45 other states are on their own.
- 78 percent of voters – including 93 percent of Democrats, 77 percent of independents and 66 percent of Republicans – support a comprehensive 12-week, national paid family and medical leave fund to help new parents, family caregivers and people dealing with their own serious health issues who need time away from their jobs.¹⁶
- Seventy percent of business owners and operators with 100 or fewer employees support the FAMILY Act model of paid leave, funded through employer and employee contributions.¹⁷

¹¹ Aguirre, D., Hoteit, L., Rupp, C., & Sabbagh, K. (2012). *Empowering the Third Billion. Women and the world of work in 2012*. Strategy& Publication. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from http://www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/Strategyand_Empowering-the-Third-Billion_Full-Report.pdf

¹² Colby, S.L., & Ortman, J.M. (2015, March). *Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060*. U.S. Census Bureau Publication. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <https://census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf>

¹³ National Alliance for Caregiving. (2015, June). *Caregiving in the U.S. 2015*. National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP Public Policy Institute Publication. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2015/caregiving-in-the-united-states-2015-report-revised.pdf>

¹⁴ Boushey, H., & Glynn, S.J. (2012, November 16). *There Are Significant Business Costs to Replacing Employees*. Center for American Progress Publication. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2012/11/16/44464/there-are-significant-business-costs-to-replacing-employees/>

¹⁵ National Partnership for Women & Families. (2017, July) *State Paid Family Leave Insurance Laws*. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/paid-leave/state-paid-family-leave-laws.pdf>

¹⁶ Lake Research Partners. (2016, November 17). *Election Eve/Night Omnibus Survey Results on Issues of Importance to Working*. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/lake-research-partners-election-eve-night-omnibus-survey-results-on-issues-of-importance-to-working-families.pdf>

¹⁷ Lake Research Partners. (2017, February). Polling commissioned by Small Business Majority and Center for American Progress. Retrieved 24 May 2017, from <http://www.smallbusinessmajority.org/sites/default/files/research-reports/033017-paid-leave-poll.pdf>

Resources

Overview:

- *New!* [An Unmet, Growing Need: The Case for Comprehensive Paid Family and Medical Leave in the United States](#)
- [50 State Factsheets](#)
- [Economic Infographic](#)
- [FAMILY Act Fact Sheet](#)

State Policies:

- [State Paid Family Leave Insurance Laws](#)
- [Paid Leave Works in California, New Jersey and Rhode Island](#)

Key Constituencies:

- [Our Aging, Caring Nation: Why a U.S. Paid Leave Plan Must Provide More Than Time to Care for New Children](#)
- [The Child Development Case for a National Paid Family and Medical Leave Program](#)
- [Treatment for Drug Use and the Need for Paid Family and Medical Leave](#)
- [Older Adults and Caregivers Need Paid Leave](#)
- [Business Leaders Who Support the FAMILY Act](#)

Other Resources:

- [NationalPartnership.org/paidleave](#)
- [SupportPaidLeave.org](#)
- [Paid Leave Research](#)

Social Media Guidance

SAMPLE TWEETS:

General FMLA25:

- The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was implemented 25 years ago. It was an important step forward for America's women and families, but #paidleavemeans fulfilling its promise of more equitable and family friendly workplaces. #FMLA25
- The FMLA has meant many workers can take needed time off without having to worry about losing their jobs or health insurance. But what would it mean if they didn't have to risk financial insecurity? That's what #paidleavemeans. #FMLA25
- As we recognize #FMLA25, it's unacceptable that still just 15% of workers have paid family leave through their employers. Real #paidleavemeans access for all working people.
- It's time for paid family and medical leave in the United States. For everyone. Period. #paidleave #FMLA25 #PaidLeaveMeans
- America's growing families need financial security when welcoming new children, whether it's through birth, fostering or adoption. That's what #paidleavemeans this #FMLA25.
- #Paidleavemeans the freedom to start a family if, when and how you choose. And it should be available to all women and working people, no matter where you live or work. #FMLA25
- #Paidleavemeans respecting the diversity of families and the spectrum of #caregiving needs. It means changing #caregiving norms. It means challenging gender stereotypes. #FMLA25
- #Paidleavemeans all working people – no matter where they live or work – have #timetocare for their own health and their families. #FMLA25
- This #FMLA25, #paidleavemeans recognizing that America's businesses and economy are stronger when working people can care and provide for themselves and their families while keeping their jobs.

Interactive:

- For #FMLA25 today, I'm listening to what #paidleavemeans to America's workers and families. If you've taken #paidleave, what was your experience? If you don't have access to paid leave, what would it mean to you?
- #Paidleavemeans protecting the health and economic well-being of working people, families, communities and our nation. What does it mean to you? Share your story today! #FMLA25

Gender Equality:

- #Paidleavemeans changing how women are treated at work. A strong national standard is essential to winning a future in which all people can live and work with dignity and respect. #MeToo #TIMESUP #FMLA25
- #Paidleavemeans more equal workplaces for everyone. It is past time to break down barriers to gender and economic equality with an inclusive national #paidleave plan. #FMLA25

FAMILY Act:

- There's no doubt the FMLA has changed our workplaces. But 25 years and 200M+ uses later, workers and families still need #paidleave. Congress must support the #FAMILYAct! #FMLA25 #PaidLeaveMeans
- Twenty-five years after the FMLA was implemented, people need #paidleave, and a national plan like the #FAMILYAct would benefit them and their families, businesses and the economy. #Paidleave means everybody wins. #FMLA25
- From the public to local officials to employers, there is strong and growing demand for #paidleave that promotes gender and economic equality and strengthens businesses and our economy. Congress must act. #FMLA25 #PaidLeaveMeans
- The #FAMILYAct would guarantee #paidleave for moms and dads (and many others!). #Paidleavemeans shifting #caregiving norms and making workplaces more equitable and family friendly. #FMLA25
- #Paidleavemeans access to needed time off no matter where you live or work. The #FAMILYAct would set a national standard and advance the FMLA's vision of more equitable and family friendly workplaces. #FMLA25
- About 40% of the workforce isn't eligible to take unpaid leave through the FMLA. It's past time for a national #paidleave guarantee – the #FAMILYAct. #FMLA25 #PaidLeaveMeans
- #Paidleavemeans fulfilling the promise of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA): more equitable, family friendly workplaces for all! After 25 years, there's a clear next step: the #FAMILYAct! #FMLA25

Images:

- “Paid Leave Checklist” gif: npwf.info/PaidLeaveChecklist
- “Paid Leave Checklist” gif in Spanish: npwf.info/2EUKSgh
- FMLA25 images: npwf.info/2DtqJOC

Full social media toolkit: <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/general/fmla25-and-paidleavemeans.pdf>