

Policy Checklist for Supporting Women and Families

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Presented by the National Partnership for Women & Families

Women's economic security and health are essential to their full participation as equal members of society. But the significant challenges they face severely undermine their financial stability, equality, dignity and agency to make decisions that will help them thrive. When we invest in their well-being, we make our nation stronger. We need policymakers to become true champions for improving the lives of women and their families, and to act on the goals outlined in [An Agenda for Progress for Women and Families](#), a comprehensive national policy agenda. The National Partnership urges policymakers to support the key legislation below and work to make each goal a reality.

GOAL #1: All women and families should be able to live in a safe and healthy environment.

- **The DREAM Act and the American Promise Act** are immigration policies that promote family unification and legal status for DREAMers and those in danger of losing Temporary Protected Status, helping to end cruel detention and deportation policies and keep families together.
- **The Equality Act** would amend existing federal civil rights laws to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation and gender identity in public accommodations and in federally funded programs or activities. It would also prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in education, employment, housing, credit, and federal jury service.
- Congress should strengthen **the Violence Against Women Act and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act**, which provide the infrastructure and support for our nation's response to domestic violence and sexual assault, including shelter and supportive services, training for criminal justice system officials, housing protections for survivors, jurisdiction for tribal courts to prosecute certain offenders, immigration protections for survivors, and much more.

GOAL #2: All working people should be free from wage and employment discrimination.

- **The Paycheck Fairness Act** would help to break harmful patterns of pay discrimination and strengthen workplace protections by making it easier for people to learn about pay disparities in their workplaces, more difficult for employers to pay disparities and by bringing penalties for pay discrimination in line with other civil rights statutes. The Fair Pay Act would also help to close the pay gap between women and men, and diminish wage disparities that result from gender-based occupational segregation, so that people who hold similar jobs are paid the same wages. These bills follow the lead of several states and cities.
- **The Raise the Wage Act** would raise the minimum wage to at least \$15 per hour, and eliminate the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers and workers with disabilities.
- **The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act** would follow the lead of more than 20 states to help pregnant people can get workplace accommodations and would promote the health and economic security of pregnant people and their families.
- **The Ending the Monopoly of Power Over Workplace harassment through Education and Reporting (EMPOWER) Act** seeks to address workplace harassment by ending practices that silence victims, like nondisclosure and nondisparagement clauses, providing stronger remedies for violations, and requiring public companies to disclose the number of settlements and judgments they are party to.
- **The Bringing An End to Harassment by Enhancing Accountability and Rejecting Discrimination (BE HEARD) in the Workplace Act** would take a comprehensive approach to protecting workers from discrimination and harassment, making workplaces safer, especially for women. Its provisions include prohibiting mandatory arbitration, clarifying standards for filing harassment claims with the EEOC and expanding protections to workers whose employers have fewer than 15 employees and to LGBTQ workers.
- Congress should update existing civil rights legislation, including **Title VII, ADA and ADEA**, to strengthen and expand workplace harassment and discrimination protections and include all employees regardless of business size and independent contractors.
- **The Fairness for Farmworkers Act** would extend overtime protections to farmworkers and remove most remaining exemptions to the minimum wage for farmworkers.

- **Support legislation lifting statutory caps on damages in civil rights lawsuits** to ensure people who experience discrimination can seek full remedies.
- **Support legislation banning forced arbitration** in employment agreements.

GOAL #3: All working people should be able to take paid time away from their jobs to care for themselves and their families.

- **The Healthy Families Act** would guarantee working people the right to earn paid sick time at their jobs to deal with a routine illness or health care need, a health care need of a loved one, and for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, to receive supportive services. For workers at businesses with fewer than 15 employees, working people would earn unpaid, job-protected sick time.
- **The Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act** would create a sustainable and affordable paid family and medical leave program through a national fund to ensure that everyone can take up to 12 weeks to care for a new child, a seriously ill, injured or disabled family member, their own serious health condition, or for certain military-related caregiving needs.
- **The Schedules that Work Act** would establish national fair scheduling standards that give workers more control over their schedules and offer them predictability and stability in shifts and work hours.
- Congress should expand the **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** to ensure that job-protected leave is available to more people for more reasons and to care for more loved ones, including eliminating the barriers that make FMLA leave unavailable to 40 percent of the workforce because they work for small employers, work less than full time or haven't spent long enough at their job and by expanding the range of family members eligible to provide and receive care.
- **The Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA)** would provide 12 weeks of fully paid time off to federal workers who are eligible for unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The leave could be used for the birth, adoption or foster placement of a new child; to care for a spouse, child or parent; for particular military caregiving and leave purposes; and for personal health reasons.

GOAL #4: Our nation's caregivers should have support to meet their responsibilities at work and at home.

- **The Child Care for Working Families Act** would make substantial new investments in child care and early learning and help make child care more affordable for working families.

- Strengthen **Social Security** by raising or eliminating the cap on taxable wages for high-income workers to help enhance benefits for retirees.
- **The Social Security Caregiver Credit Act** would create caregiving credits to make it possible for people to take time out of the workforce to care for their loved ones without substantially diminishing their own Social Security retirement security.
- **The Domestic Worker Bill of Rights** would extend workplace protections and benefits to our nation’s two million domestic workers, including the right to overtime pay, workplace safety protections, the right to form a union and recourse against workplace harassment and discrimination. It would also create new protections, including the right to meal and rest breaks, paid sick days, fair scheduling practices, written agreements and additional protections for live-in workers.

GOAL #5: Every woman should have the tools to be able to decide whether and when to become a parent or grow her family, free of shame or stigma.

- **The EACH Woman Act** would restore abortion coverage for women enrolled in Medicaid and other government-managed health programs currently prohibited by the Hyde Amendment and similar restrictions. It would also prohibit laws that restrict private health insurance coverage of abortion care.
- **The Women’s Health Protection Act** would combat state abortion restrictions that push abortion care out of reach for many, and that undermine the practice of medicine.
- Congress should protect the **Affordable Care Act’s** requirement of copay-free coverage of FDA-approved contraceptives and contraceptive care.
- Congress should protect **Title X**, the sole federal grant program dedicated to advancing people’s access to comprehensive contraceptive and related family planning services, by fully funding it and protecting against changes that undermine patients’ right to receive unbiased, comprehensive counseling at the provider of their choice.
- Congress should support measures that would **expand people’s access to high quality reproductive health care providers**, such as Planned Parenthood.
- **The Real Education for Healthy Youth Act** would ensure federal funding for programs that provide adolescents and young adults with the information and skills they need to make informed, responsible, and healthy decisions in order to become sexually healthy adults and have healthy relationships.

- **The Quality Care for Moms and Babies Act** would increase community-based quality improvement activities and establish a core set of much-needed quality measures in Medicaid and in the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- Congress should invest in **Maternal and Child Health Block Grants**, which promote and improve the health and well-being of women and children.
- **The Affordability is Access Act** would ensure that people have access to birth control over-the-counter without a prescription or out-of-pocket costs.
- **The Access to Contraception for Servicemembers and Dependents Act** would require that all women who receive their health insurance through the military have parity with civilian women and have access to all forms of FDA-approved contraception and family planning counseling without a health insurance co-pay.

GOAL #6: Everyone should have access to affordable, comprehensive insurance coverage and health care.

- Congress should protect **the Affordable Care Act** against attempts to repeal it, in whole or in part, as this essential law provides for quality, affordable insurance coverage for millions of women and families, and protects against discrimination in federally funded programs and activities.
- **The Lower Health Care Costs Act** would protect women and families from surprise billing and establish payment through a benchmark rate that is pegged to the median in-network rate for a geographic area.
- **The Protecting Americans with Preexisting Conditions Act of 2019, the Lowering Prescription Drug Costs, the Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act and the Health Care Affordability Act** would protect care for those with pre-existing conditions and substantially lower costs for consumers.
- **The Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMA’s) Act, the Maximizing Outcomes for Moms through Medicaid Improvement and Enhancement of Services (MOMMIES) Act and the Healthy Maternal and Obstetric Medicine (Healthy MOM) Act** would expand postpartum Medicaid coverage for a year after childbirth, support other policies to improve maternal health outcomes and help close racial disparities that put women and families of color at risk.

GOAL #7: Health outcomes should be the same for everyone living in the United States.

- **The Health Equity and Accountability Act** is a comprehensive vision for addressing persistent racial and ethnic health disparities and improving health outcomes in communities of color.
- **The Health Equity and Access under the Law (HEAL) Immigrant Women and Families Act** would remove existing legal and policy barriers to immigrant women’s and their families’ ability to obtain the health coverage they need, whether through the Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program, or on health insurance marketplaces.
- **The Do No Harm Act** would make clear that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act’s (RFRA) protections of the exercise of religion cannot be used to deny access to reproductive health care or other services, or to undermine civil rights protections.
- **The Protecting Sensitive Locations Act** ensures that immigrants are able to access health care, education, criminal justice, and social services without fear of deportation.
- **The Maternal Care Access and Reducing Emergencies (CARE) Act** would address systemic and implicit racism in the maternity care system by providing grants for implicit bias training.
- **The Modernizing Obstetric Medicine Standards (MOMS) Act** would provide new funding to hospitals with obstetrics and gynecology practices that want to improve their response to pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated complications by implementing standardized best practices

Women Need Policymakers to Act Now

We urge policymakers to advance progress for women and families. We need policies that expand opportunities for women and promote the security and well-being of our nation’s families. Women are essential to healthy families, economies, and communities, and deserve full equality and dignity. It is critical that policymakers become champions for women and families, and invest in a thriving society for generations to come.

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at NationalPartnership.org.

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