

HELP WORKING FAMILIES HAVE A STRONG START

Support the Establishment of a National Paid Family Leave Program



The Problem:

The U.S. is one of only three countries that does not guaranteed paid leave for new mothers. **Only 17% of the workforce has any paid family leave through an employer.** More than half of mothers enter or return to the labor force before their children turn one year old, with as many as **one in four women returning within just two weeks of giving birth.** Families of color and low-income women are more likely to return to work earlier and have jobs that make it challenging to continue breastfeeding, contributing to lifelong health inequities. Only 4% of the lowest-paid workers (those paid \$10 or less per hour) have paid family leave, compared to 27% of the highest-paid workers.

The Department of Defense has updated their Military Parental Leave Program so service members can take paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child, creating significant progress toward a more inclusive policy reflective of the diverse demographics of military families, however there are several key problematic issues which lead to inconsistent and inequitable application of parental leave.

The Solutions:

- **Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act**

The FAMILY Act, introduced in the House and Senate, would provide workers with up to 12 weeks of partial income when they take time for their own serious health conditions, including pregnancy and childbirth recovery; the serious health condition of a child, parent, spouse, or domestic partner; the birth or adoption of a child; and/or for particular military caregiving and leave purposes.

- **Military Parental Leave Modernization Act**

The Military Parental Leave Modernization Act, introduced during the 114th Congressional Session, was designed to simplify and streamline military parental leave by creating 12 weeks of paid family leave for every servicemember whenever a new child enters the family. This bill would address gaps in the Military Parental Leave Program.

Demonstrated Effectiveness & Support:

Paid family leave supports family bonding and caregiving, allows women to successfully combine their reproductive and employment roles, and supports increased breastfeeding rates. It provides other crucial protections to preserve the health of both mothers and children, ultimately reducing health care costs. Research clearly shows that women with longer maternity leaves are more likely to be able to combine breastfeeding and employment. In California, access to paid family leave doubled the median duration of breastfeeding for all new mothers who used it during the first six years after the state's paid family leave law went into effect in 2004.

Please support legislation to ensure that every breastfeeding family has the support they need to succeed.

U.S. Breastfeeding Committee • www.USBreastfeeding.org

