

The Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (H.R. 947/S. 337)

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The lack of earned family leave for millions of workers in the U.S. leaves parents with the impossible choice between staying home to care for and bond with their newborn or losing necessary income.

The Family and Medical Insurance Leave (The FAMILY) Act, reintroduced by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), would relieve families of this impossible choice by creating a comprehensive national paid leave program in the U.S.

Health Benefits to Children and Families

Access to paid family leave has significant positive health implications for children and families by allowing parents to care for their children.

- Men are more involved with their child's direct care when they are able to take off two or more weeks after the birth of their child;
- Mothers are available to breastfeed their newborn;
- Parents can easily take newborns to doctor for important check-ups and immunizations;ⁱ
- Seriously ill children have shorter hospital stays when parents are present.ⁱⁱ

Economic Benefits

Paid family and medical leave promotes families' financial security and independence and increases worker retention. For example, when parents have a new child, the money they receive using their paid time off can be used to cover medical expenses for the baby. Additionally, paid maternity leave encourages workforce attachment, and allows new mothers to stay home with their newborn.

Paid leave also promotes family financial independence. According to the National Partnership, new mothers who take paid leave are over 50% more likely to receive a future pay increase. Mothers who do not take paid leave are 39% more likely to need public assistance to care for their family than those who take paid maternity leave.ⁱⁱⁱ

The FAMILY Act

- Workers in all companies, no matter the size, would be eligible for up to 12 weeks of partial income for family and medical leave, including pregnancy, childbirth recovery, serious health condition of a child, parent, spouse, or domestic partner, birth or adoption of a child and/or military caregiving and leave.
- Workers could earn 66 percent of their monthly wages, up to a capped amount. The cost of providing this leave would be covered by small employee and employer payroll contributions of two cents per \$10 in wages or about \$1.50 a week for the average worker.
- An Office of Paid Family and Medical Leave within the Social Security Administration would be created to administer this new program.



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ⁱ Berger, L., Hill, J., & Waldfogel, J. (2005). Maternity Leave, Early Maternal Employment and Child Health and Development in the US. *The Economic Journal*, 115(501), F44.

ⁱⁱ Heymann, J. (2001, October 15). *The Widening Gap: Why America's Working Families Are in Jeopardy—and What Can Be Done About It*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

ⁱⁱⁱ Houser, L., & Vartanian, T. (2012, January). *Pay Matters: The Positive Economic Impact of Paid Family Leave for Families, Businesses and the Public*. Center for Women and Work at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey Publication. Retrieved 3 March 2015, from http://www.nationalpartnership.org/site/DocServer/Pay_Matters_Positive_Economic_Impacts_of_Paid_Family_L.pdf?docID=9681

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