

PAID LEAVE for ALL ACTION

February 4, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth H.O.B
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
2468 Rayburn House H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell:

We represent tens of millions of workers, union members, parents, caregivers, small business owners and advocates for racial justice, gender equity, disability rights, and more, and we are asking you to ensure strong paid leave protections are included in the upcoming COVID relief package to deliver the help working families desperately need. Paid leave is a complement to vaccine dissemination, to quarantine protocols, to helping long-haul COVID survivors and caregivers get the care they need, and to parents who are now nearly a year into school and child care disruptions.

Emergency paid sick and child care leave was one of the first things Congress passed in a bipartisan vote last March in recognition of how important paid leave is to beating this public health crisis; and even with a new program that was never widely implemented, it prevented more than [15,000](#) COVID-19 cases per day in states where emergency paid leave created new rights in 2020. It prevented countless hospitalizations and evictions; it saved countless jobs and lives. However, that policy lapsed in December—extending tax credits to employers that choose to provide paid leave but removing obligations. The people and businesses we represent need the protection of real paid leave.

More than [450,000](#) people in the United States have died from coronavirus. Nearly 100,000 people are being treated for it in hospitals. Nearly 850,000 workers [filed](#) for unemployment benefits in one week last month. Since the start of the pandemic, women have lost over 5.4 million net jobs, and women of color have borne the greatest losses. With every peak and dangerous new strain, more schools and child care programs will close. Workers are facing impossible choices without this protection, between their safety and their paycheck, their family's health and their job, choices that impact not just their own families, but their coworkers, customers, and communities.

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The Biden-Harris American Rescue Plan unveiled last month includes the reinstatement and strengthening of emergency paid leave as a critical part of pandemic relief. This would save lives by preventing the spread of the virus, conserve health care resources, and save the jobs of workers and families across America. We urge you to include these provisions in the final package, and to prioritize a permanent paid leave program so that we're never unprepared for a crisis again.

If you want to support policies that bring us together, paid leave is one of the most broadly supported policies in the country. [Eighty-five](#) percent of voters in 2020 senate battlegrounds and 86 percent in frontline congressional districts supported paid leave, and they wanted it more than any other relief policy on the table. [Two-thirds](#) of small business owners support national paid leave, and even more in the context of COVID. Paid leave also addresses racial and gender disparities only deepened in this pandemic. It affords protections to all families, and particularly essential workers who have risked their lives every day. It is what is required to meet the unprecedented scale of this crisis.

We cannot safely return to in-person learning, reopen businesses and public spaces, or end this pandemic without the guarantee that workers can stay home with pay when they are sick or when they need to care for loved ones. Even before the pandemic, workers and their families lost an estimated combined [\\$22.5 billion](#) in wages each year due to a lack of paid family and medical leave. The lack of access to paid leave also leads to higher costs in unemployment, health care, and compounding financial losses. We must act now.

Paid leave is one of the best and most cost-effective solutions we have for our public health and economic recovery and there is a path to finally pass paid leave for all in this country. We needed it the last time we faced a pandemic. We need it now. And we need it permanently.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days

9to5

A Better Balance

American Federation of Teachers

American Sustainable Business Council

Black Women's Roundtable

California Work and Family Coalition

Campaign for a Family Friendly Economy, Virginia

Caring Across Generations

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Center for American Progress
Center for Economic and Policy Research
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Popular Democracy
Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWELF)
Detroit Action
DC Jobs With Justice
Economic Opportunity Institute
Economic Progress Institute
Family Values @ Work
Family Voices New Jersey
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Make It Work Nevada
Main Street Alliance
Michigan Liberation
MomsRising
Mothering Justice
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Education Association
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
New Jersey Citizen Action
North Carolina Justice Center
Paid Leave for All Action
PathWays PA
PL+US: Paid Leave for the United States
Poder Latinx
Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) United
Service Employees International Union
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network
Sierra Club Michigan Chapter

PAID LEAVE for ALL ACTION

Small Business Majority

Supermajority

TIME'S UP Now

TakeAction Minnesota

The Arc of the United States

The Ohio Women's Public Policy Network

UltraViolet Action

United State of Women

United for Respect

Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest PA

Women Employed

Women's Foundation of Florida

Women's Law Project

Workers Defense Action Fund

ZERO TO THREE

cc: President Joe R. Biden