



MILLENNIALS FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

Support the **FAMILY AND MEDICAL INSURANCE LEAVE ACT**

Dear Senator Murphy,

MEOW, a non-profit that grew from three students in a UConn dorm to a 15,000-strong organization, is proud to call Connecticut its home. However, while this great state has led the country through its paid sick leave legislation, our working families are still denied an essential benefit: **paid family leave**.

We strongly encourage you to work with Senator Gillibrand to re-introduce S.786, the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act, in the 115th Congress.

Legislation Overview:

- Creates a national insurance fund through minimal employee + employer contributions (two-tenths of one percent of a worker’s wages)
- Eligible employees – including full *and* part-time workers - can claim up to 12 weeks of paid leave, w/ 66% wage replacement
- Applies regardless of age, marital status, and gender
- Intended for personal or family member’s medical emergencies: includes those related to service members’ deployment + caring for newborns

Why support this policy?

1. Significant impact on both mothers’ and children’s health
2. Clear, research-based benefits for our economy
3. Deeply-held American values of equal rights and equal opportunity

Mothers’ Health Benefits:

- 2012 ABT Associates survey: Nearly 25% of new moms are **working less than 2 wks. after giving birth**
- According to 2004 NBER working paper, women who took longer maternity leaves were significantly **less likely to show depressive symptoms**

Children’s Health Benefits:

- 2005 study from Economic Journal: children over 20% **more likely to get measles vaccines** when mother has paid leave
- 2013 study of Denmark, UK, US + Australia shows **fathers more likely to do childcare activities** if they take paternity leave



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Revitalizing the American Economy:

- 2016 McKinsey report: if women achieve gender parity in the workforce (working at same rates w/ same pay as men) by 2025, the U.S. would **add 4.3 trillion of additional annual GDP**
- 2011 Census: 1) 9-12 mths after childbirth, moms w/ paid leave **return to work at higher rates** than those who take no leave; 2) First-time moms w/ paid leave **return to same employer** more than those w/ unpaid or no leave
- But, w/o paid leave for men, women are much more likely to face **“mommy-tracking”** from employers, who expect them to have lower tenure
- 2013 Cornell study: women in US more likely to occupy positions than women in European countries w/ expansive maternity leave policies

Gender Equality for Women:

- Women far more likely to **shoulder responsibilities of primary caregiving** for infants/kids
- 2015: 10 million full-time moms, fewer than 2 million full-time dads
- So, absence of paid leave policies falls most heavily on mothers
- Paid leave: necessary for women to have **an equal opportunity for professional success**

Gender Equality for Men:

- Men deserve the same wage replacement as women for raising children: **equal pay for equal work** professionally *and* at home
- **Men want to be more involved fathers**, and deserve the equal opportunity to do so
- Sweden offers paid leave for both parents: 90% of fathers stay home for an average of 3-4 months each

Opponents claim that the cost of paid leave will hurt business. However, this law will be funded through a .2% payroll tax on workers and companies – \$1.38 per week for the median wage earner. In a slowly recovering economy, change that costs less than a cup of coffee is a no-brainer. **As the 115th Congress begins, we hope you’ll re-introduce the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act** and show working families that you have their back.

Regards,

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Uma Ramesh
Executive Director