

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 17, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-220, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader Schumer, and Leader McConnell:

As fathers, sons, brothers, and grandsons who serve in Congress and who will each likely need to give and receive care in our lifetimes, we are writing to urge you to prioritize meaningful paid leave in the next recovery and jobs plan and to work with us to pass an inclusive and effective paid leave policy into law.

The provisions and receipt of care is a universal need, not limited to just women. In most countries, being able to take paid time away for health, recovery, and care is simply a given for everyone. The pandemic highlighted not only what an outlier we are in the United States for not already having these basic protections in law, but also how fundamental they are to our economic infrastructure and security. President Biden has included comprehensive paid family and medical leave in the American Families Plan, and there are proposals in Congress as well. We can and we must act now and finally pass paid leave for all in the United States.

Over the last 50 years, fathers in the United States have tripled the time they spend caring for children. Half of men in the workforce expect to need time to care for a sick, disabled or older family member – the same share as women. Paid leave will increase women’s labor force participation by promoting men’s involvement at home and making it easier for women to return to the workforce. The evidence is overwhelming: access to paid leave yields returns for families’ financial health and physical wellbeing.

The market is not and will not solve this problem on its own. Currently only one in five workers in this country have paid family leave through their employers, and only two in five have employer-provided short-term disability. One in five retirees leave the workforce earlier than planned to care for an ill family member. Meanwhile, evidence from states and high-road employers shows the consistent and meaningful benefits of paid leave: it reduces turnover, puts more money into local economies, improves the health and wellbeing of families, and makes businesses more competitive. Studies have proven paid leave produces a positive return on investment, and increases productivity, performance, and profitability.

Further, requiring it is a key factor in addressing racial, ethnic and gender disparities in access to and use of paid leave. Understanding these disparities is important in light of evidence from national surveys that indicate that parents from communities of color frequently do not take unpaid leave because they cannot afford it, and disparities in access to wealth and wealth building are compounded by a lack of access to paid leave.

We cannot maintain our global competitiveness or prepare a 21st century workforce if our workplace policies leave our workers behind the rest of the world and are not resilient enough to meet crisis moments, whether a global pandemic or a family emergency. The reality that more than two million women have left the workforce entirely over the course of the last year, impacts far more than women; it impacts their partners, their families, their coworkers and communities. In fact, according to the AARP, 40 percent of family caregivers are men. This hole in our infrastructure impacts all of our bottom lines. Families in America lose \$22.5 billion each year because of a lack of paid leave. We cannot afford the high cost of inaction.

Paid leave has the broad support of voters across party lines. Paid leave has consistently been voters' top relief policy, and one they want permanently – we must meet them. The challenges of the last year with COVID-19, and the challenges working families have been absorbing for years before, have brought us to an inflection point. The pandemic has made clear how critical paid family leave is for everyone, and now is the time to make it a reality. We need a paid leave framework that is accessible and affordable for every working family across the country, which would apply to men as well as women.

We ask you to join us in prioritizing this life saving policy. Thank you for your commitment to care, for your leadership and your partnership.

Sincerely,



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



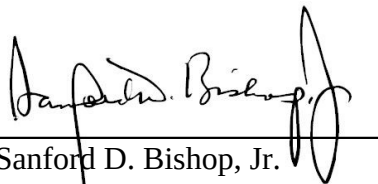
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United States Senator



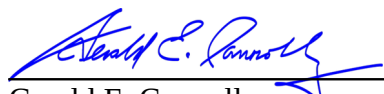
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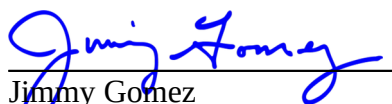
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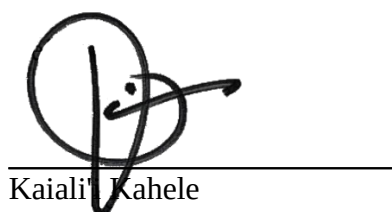
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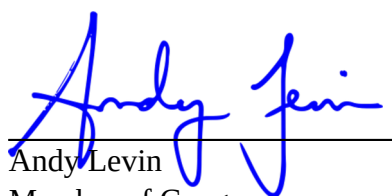
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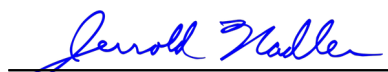
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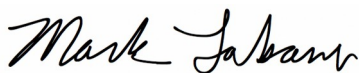
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cc: President Joseph R. Biden
Vice President Kamala Harris