

CHILD CARE

ASK CANDIDATES IF THEY SUPPORT FAMILY LEAVE LEGISLATION

If a NYS Senator, you could ask if they would vote for the Family Leave Bill the same as A9245 passed by the Assembly this last session.

Background Summary

1. Employees would pay 40 cents a week for disability insurance that would give parents 12 weeks off at half pay up to \$170 to bond/care for newborns or newly adopted children.
2. Parents could stay with babies longer without facing economic hardships.
3. Parents would be able to provide essential care resulting in healthier children.
4. Without this law, babies under six weeks with undeveloped immune systems are placed in facilities where there is an increased risk of illness.

WHY WE NEED THE NYS FAMILY LEAVE BILL

We need legislation that would provide paid family leave in NYS, letting working parents spend the time they want, need, and deserve with newborns or newly adopted children. The bill the assembly past last session would have workers pay an additional 40 cents per week into a disability insurance plan, allowing them to take up to 12 weeks off at half pay—up to \$170 a week.

Our current system forces an unfortunate choice upon far too many parents - go back to work when a child is just weeks old or risk not being able to pay the bills. Numerous studies show that paid leave improves children's health outcomes by making more time available to parents to provide essential care for children, by facilitating breastfeeding that reduces the risk of infections, and by increasing the likelihood that children will receive necessary immunizations, all of which contribute to lower infant mortality and morbidity rates.

More time for parents also allows for the formation of bonds between parents and children, fostering positive emotional development of children. Families who have adopted or who have a child with special needs often require even more time to form attachments and adjust to new family dynamics.

Paid family leave is particularly important with regard to child care arrangements. NYS, unlike many other states, does not prohibit licensed centers from accepting babies under six weeks old. However, centers must secure a waiver to serve those children. This is because babies' immune systems are not yet fully developed, putting them at increased risk of infection. Because of these necessary restrictions, working parents are often forced to place very young infants in unlicensed and possibly unsafe child care in order to return to work on time. This legislation would keep babies from unnecessary health risks.

Paid family leave legislation is a step in the right direction. New mothers or fathers should have the opportunity to stay at home with their babies for a little while longer, without risking economic hardship.

From AAUW Action Network 7/7/08-The House passed Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act June 19 now in the US Senate. The US Joint Economic Committee estimates that it costs nearly three times as much to replace an employee than to provide them with four weeks of paid parental leave. In addition to reducing turnover, paid parental leave can lead to increased productivity, better morale, and reduced absenteeism.

Nancy Mion, AAUW NYS Public Policy Director & WBNY

LEGISLATORS WANT TO BE ELECTED- LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU WANT THEM TO SUPPORT *FAMILY LEAVE* LEGISLATION