

Talking Points

Paid Sick Days and Family Leave

The success of our economy depends on the success of our families. NCJW endorses and resolves to work for laws, policies, and employment practices that allow workers to meet both family and work responsibilities. **In the United States, 83% of workers do not have access to paid family leave through their employer.**¹ Since its founding, NCJW members have advocated for policies that support working women and families. The Jewish value of *kavod ha'briot*, respect and dignity for all human beings, **guides our advocacy for paid sick days and paid family leave legislation to ensure that workers do not have to choose between earning a living and caring for their families.**

Workplace policies have not kept pace with the changing needs of families.

- Even though only 20% of households adhere to a traditional nuclear family structure,² some current proposals would only cover parental leave, excluding those adopting or fostering children, such as LGBTQ families or grandparents.
- 43.5 million individuals provide unpaid care to family members, and most family caregivers also have full-time jobs.³
- Paid leave must encompass more than just birth — 36% of women are survivors of domestic or sexual violence and need paid sick days to get necessary help and care.⁴

The Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (S 463/HR 1185) would create an affordable, comprehensive, national paid family and medical leave program for up to 12 weeks of paid leave. Eight states and DC have passed paid family and medical leave laws.

The Healthy Families Act (S 840/HR 1784) would set a national paid sick leave minimum standard of seven job-protected paid sick days per year. Twelve states and 32 jurisdictions, including DC, have passed paid sick days laws.

The absence of federal paid family leave and sick days laws most harms women and people of color.

- The current patchwork of state and local paid leave and paid sick days laws covers only a fraction of workers.
- 42% of women overall — including 71% of black women and 41% of Latina women — are heads of households⁵, leaving millions forced to choose between their families' health and economic security.
- 80% of low-wage earners lack paid sick time; 53% of black workers and 60% of Latinx workers fall into this category.⁶

When workers do not have access to paid leave, their jobs, families, and communities suffer.

- Lack of paid leave puts those most economically vulnerable at risk; even if they are able to take medical or sick leave, 46% of workers report being unable to afford unpaid leave.⁷
- Sick children are more likely to be sent to school and sick parents are more likely to go to work — both of which have serious public health implications.
- The lack of paid leave impacts the economy, as businesses are vulnerable during periods of illness, such as cold and flu season.

¹ "National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States." U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics. September 2018.

² People Need Paid Leave Policies That Cover Chosen Family Center for American Progress. 2017.

³ Security & Stability: Paid Family and Medical Leave and its Importance to People with Disabilities and their Families. Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality Publication. 2017.

⁴ "Moving women and families forward." National Women's Law Center. 2016.

⁵ "Breadwinning Mothers Are Increasingly the U.S. Norm." Center for American Progress. December 2016

⁶ "Millions of low-wage workers in the US are struggling to survive." Oxfam America. June 2016.

⁷ Klerman, J.A., Daley, K., & Pozniak, A. Family and Medical Leave in 2012: Technical Report. Abt Associates Publication. 2012.