



Job Protection Act

Quotes in Support

A Better Balance: “A Better Balance applauds Representative Underwood and Senator Smith for introducing the Job Protection Act. When it became law almost 30 years ago, the Family and Medical Leave Act was a landmark piece of legislation protecting the jobs of workers taking time to care for a new child or their own serious health condition -- or that of a parent, spouse or minor child. But serious eligibility restrictions in the FMLA mean that more than 40% of workers -- many of them low wage workers -- can lose their jobs when they have a new baby or need to care for themselves or a sick family member. The Job Protection Act is critically important legislation that will make it possible for ALL workers to care for themselves and their families without risking their jobs.” - A Better Balance

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE): “AFGE applauds Representative Underwood and Senator Smith for the introduction of the Job Protection Act. This bill would grant needed benefits to federal workers and American families across the country. American workers are continuing to recover from the pandemic and its economic fluctuations, which for many essential workers required unprecedented, once-in-a-generation sacrifices. There’s never been a better time to show our appreciation for America’s workforce and ensure workers are able to take time off to care for themselves and their family while knowing their job is safe. AFGE thanks Representative Underwood and Senator Smith for introducing this legislation, and we look forward to these expanded benefits helping working families.” - American Federation of Government Employees

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO): “Working people shouldn't be afraid to lose our livelihoods simply because we need time off to care for ourselves and our families. The Job Protection Act brings us closer to the promise of making family and medical leave for all workers a reality," said AFL-CIO President, Liz Shuler. “The pandemic has brought into focus the need for comprehensive policies and protections that provide more flexibility to working people. Making these changes will ensure equity in our workforce, particularly for low-wage workers, people of color and women, many of whom still have not returned to the workforce. It's past time that we recognized family and medical leave as a basic human necessity.”

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME): “Family should always come first, but too many employers try to come between us and our loved ones. They can fire us for taking time off to be with a new baby, a sick spouse, or a parent experiencing a medical emergency. In 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) took the first steps toward solving this problem, but almost 44 percent of the workforce is excluded from FMLA protections. The Job Protection Act would help close this devastating gap. It would greatly expand FMLA eligibility, and it would be a critical first step toward a national paid family leave program. On behalf of AFSCME's 1.4 million members, we are grateful to Senator Smith and Representative Underwood for putting our families first.” - President Lee Saunders, AFSCME

American Federation of Teachers (AFT): “At the core of our fight for a better life for all is the ongoing effort to create and maintain family-sustaining jobs with decent pay and safe, inclusive working conditions. That includes access to paid leave so any worker can take time off to care for themselves or their loved ones. The Job Protection Act would help do that. It would close gaps in the Family and Medical Leave Act and strengthen the law’s protections to include our most vulnerable workers—workers who are currently left out of these federal protections because they either work multiple part-time jobs, are re-entering the workforce due to COVID-19 challenges, or work for a smaller employer.” said Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers. “Working people are facing growing challenges—including shortages and increased stress in a time of great division. The expansion of FMLA coverage under the Job Protection Act is an important way to counter this by helping to ensure our federal paid leave program is truly equitable and offers anyone who needs it the ability to care for themselves and their family with dignity.” - Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers

American Sustainable Business Network: “The American Sustainable Business Network and our members are highly supportive of Representative Underwood’s and Senator Smith’s Job Protection Act. The protections offered by this legislation will ensure that all workers, especially those historically underserved, have the support needed to remain in the workforce, which in turn strengthens the business community, and supports a vibrant and healthy labor market and economy.” - David Levine, President, American Sustainable Business Network

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP): “The Job Protection Act supports the health and well-being of our nation’s families by closing crucial gaps in family and medical leave coverage for the U.S. workforce,” said Terrance E. Moore, Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP). “Current FMLA coverage does not protect 44% of the U.S. workforce, with women and communities of color disproportionately left out. By expanding FMLA coverage to individuals working for smaller employers, newly entering or reentering the workforce, and in part-time positions, the Job Protection Act ensures that workers can remain in the workforce while taking the time they need to care for themselves and their families after the birth or adoption of a child or due to a serious health condition. As a national organization representing state leaders in public health dedicated to improving maternal and child health, AMCHP is proud to endorse the Job Protection Act and

grateful to Representative Lauren Underwood and Senator Tina Smith for their leadership on this critically important legislation.” - Terrance E. Moore, CEO, AMCHP

Center for Economic and Policy Research: “Lack of job protection means many low-wage or part-time workers do not take the leaves they need. Lack of job protection means that nearly a quarter of new mothers return to work in 2 weeks or less. Among new mothers who are college graduates, most of whom have job protection, 80 percent take 6 weeks or more of leave from their jobs to recover from childbirth and bond with the new baby. The Job Protection Act will eliminate this gap and close many other disparities in who gets to care for themselves and their families.” - Eileen Appelbaum, Co-Director, Center for Economic and Policy Research

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP): “We applaud Senator Smith and Representative Underwood for reintroducing the Job Protection Act,” said [Indivar Dutta-Gupta](#), president and executive director at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). “This bill would expand family and medical leave protections to tens of millions of workers not currently covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), including workers at small businesses, part-time workers, and workers changing jobs. Gaps in FMLA disproportionately harm women and people of color, who can lose their job when taking time to care for a new baby, sick family member, or their own serious illness. After 30 years of federally guaranteed family and medical leave, we know that small businesses don’t suffer when employees take leave and can even benefit from greater employee retention when this leave is available. Now is the time to close longstanding gaps and ensure that working people have the protections needed to care for themselves and their families.”

Children’s Defense Fund: “Millions of parents—especially women, Black and Latinx workers—are currently excluded from the Family and Medical Leave Act’s (FMLA’s) vital protections. The Job Protection Act’s expansion of FMLA coverage is an important step toward an equitable and universal federal paid leave program that will nurture children and help them thrive.” - Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, President & CEO, Children’s Defense Fund

The Educare Learning Network: “The Educare Learning Network is dedicated to ensuring that all children and families have the opportunity to thrive; that’s why we’re proud to endorse the Job Protection Act to expand and strengthen job protection measures in the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Job protected leave not only allows workers to take time off to care for themselves and their families, but also promotes family and child well-being and security, a key priority of our Educare Five Policy Agenda. We urge the passage of this important legislation that helps advance basic supports for families across the country.” - The Educare Learning Network

Family Values @ Work: “It is past time that the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) be modernized to meet the needs of today’s working families. Representative Underwood’s and Senator Smith’s legislation will increase access to leave for workers, a critical support families need for economic security. We can’t build back better without leave and other policies like childcare that will support working caregivers. Our economic recovery depends on Congress

taking action now to ensure that every worker has access to the earned prosperity we all share, which includes family and medical leave.” - Carol Joyner, Director, Labor Project for Working Families at Family Values @ Work

The Gerontological Society of America: “Expanding the job protections in FMLA coverage will allow more people to manage their health and the health of their families, which will benefit us all as we age. It is essential that as a nation we continue to develop policy to ensure we meet basic standards to protect and support all types of caregivers. Thank you for introducing a bill that moves us forward in this direction.” - James C. Appleby, BSPHarm, MPH, ScD (Hon), Chief Executive Officer of The Gerontological Society of America

Human Rights Campaign: “The Human Rights Campaign thanks Representative Underwood and Senator Smith for introducing this important legislation to improve access to family and medical leave, either to care for themselves or for a loved one. The Job Protection Act would reshape the Family Medical Leave Act to make it accessible for millions of workers, particularly those most marginalized in our economy, who currently can’t take advantage of its benefits. Among those who have been denied full FMLA benefits are a disproportionate share of LGBTQ+ people, as a 2018 HRC survey showed one in five respondents would be afraid to request time off to care for a loved one because it might disclose their LGBTQ identity, and women and Black and Brown people are also disproportionately unable to fully utilize FMLA.” - Joni Madison, Interim President of the Human Rights Campaign

Main Street Alliance: “For 30 years FMLA has been a resource for employees across the country. However many small businesses are routinely excluded from FMLA. Small businesses employ 46% of all US employees, and this is expected to increase as more than 10 million new small businesses have been established in the last two years. Small businesses need a policy that extends past FMLA to provide a reliable, accessible and affordable paid leave program. The Jobs Protection Act is a huge step towards filling the gaps of FMLA and increasing support for small businesses owners and the 61.7 million workers they employ across the country.” - Naomi Smith, Policy Program Manager

National Women’s Law Center: “During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, part-time workers—who are disproportionately women and women of color—especially struggled to make ends meet while caring for themselves and their families. And today, women are still too often forced out of the paid workforce because of caregiving needs, depriving them of critical workplace supports. Expanding the protections of the FMLA to cover more workers will help improve the quality of part-time work, reduce gender and racial disparities in access to leave, and ensure that working people do not have to choose between keeping their jobs and caring for their loved ones.” - Julie Vogtman, Director of Job Quality, National Women’s Law Center

National Organization of Women (NOW): “Expanding coverage of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to all workers, including part-time employees, is an essential step to protect all workers – especially women and caregivers, many of whom were affected by the pandemic’s economic dislocation. National Organization for Women President Christian F. Nunes said,

Congress must pass the Job Protection Act to ensure that workers at smaller companies are covered, that part-time employees can also benefit from FMLA protections and that workers are more quickly covered by the FMLA when they move on to a new job. The Job Protection Act will not only strengthen families but will help the economy grow in ways that benefit everyone.
- Christian F. Nunes, President, NOW

Paid Leave for All: “Thank you to Senator Tina Smith and Representative Lauren Underwood and all of the cosponsors for leading on this important legislation to strengthen FMLA's protections and to lay the groundwork for an equitable paid family and medical leave law in this country. It is unconscionable that in America today 3 in 4 workers lack paid family leave from their jobs and millions lack the guarantee of even unpaid leave. It is past time for our policies to catch up with the rest of the world and the needs of our families and a 21st century economy. Closing these gaps is a step toward the care infrastructure and paid leave protections we need for a strong and resilient economy.” - Dawn Huckelbridge, Director of Paid Leave for All

The National Domestic Violence Hotline: “Among other challenges, survivors of domestic violence too often struggle to maintain consistent employment due to their partner’s abusive behavior. In addition, survivors often work in jobs not covered by the existing protections available through the FMLA. Survivors should not have to make the choice between their jobs and their health, or that of their families. By expanding access to paid leave, the Jobs Protection Act would increase support to survivors of domestic violence who work part time, work for smaller employers, or who need to make changes in their jobs and careers for their safety.” - Katie Ray-Jones, CEO of The National Domestic Violence Hotline

National Partnership for Women & Families: “Although we estimate the Family and Medical Leave Act has allowed people to take time off to care for themselves and their loved ones 460 million times, many are left out of its protections and those left out are more likely to be workers of color. We continue to fight for the workers and caregivers left out and who cannot rely on their job waiting for them when they return from caring for themselves or their loved ones. The reintroduction of the Job Protection Act is proof of Rep. Underwood and Sen. Smith’s commitment to the fight for all workers, whether they are full- or part-time workers, or new on the job,” said Sharita Gruberg, vice president for economic justice at the National Partnership for Women & Families. “Caring for yourself or your family without fear of losing one’s job should be available to every worker. Until a national, comprehensive paid family leave policy is passed, we will continue to advocate for workers to get these kinds of well-deserved protections.” - Sharita Gruberg, vice president for economic justice at the National Partnership for Women & Families

Start Early: “Start Early is proud to endorse Representative Underwood's and Senator Smith’s Job Protection Act. Relationships with parents and other caregivers are critical to a baby’s early development, and subsequently their long-term cognitive, social and emotional development. Parents and caregivers across our country deserve the opportunity to bond with and care for their children without jeopardizing their ability to afford their family’s basic needs. Enacting

family-friendly public policies like the Job Protection Act that provide parents with paid leave from work to care for their young children helps families begin their journey on a strong foundation of caring, consistent relationships and promotes families as a child's first and most important teacher.” - Ireta Gasner, Vice President of Illinois Policy, Start Early

United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW): “The UFCW supports the Job Protection Act, which would improve and strengthen the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). While FMLA, which was signed into law 29 years ago, has been a critical tool in helping workers keep their jobs as the pandemic continues, too many hard-working families are not covered by its protections. The Job Protection Act would close gaps and strengthen the law’s protections by expanding FMLA’s coverage to workers who work at smaller employers, work multiple part-time jobs, or lost or quit their jobs due to COVID-19 and are reentering the workforce. The Job Protection Act, coupled with ensuring that all workers have a right to join a union, will help our country’s workers take care of themselves and their families without fear of losing their jobs and strengthen our economy. We urge Congress to support this critical legislation.” - Ademola Oyefeso, International Vice President and Director of Legislation and Political Action Department, UFCW

United States Breastfeeding Committee: “Access to family and medical leave is a vital component of maternal and child health and should be available for all workers—and the Job Protection Act can help us get there,” said Nikia Sankofa, Executive Director of the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee. “Family leave programs make it possible for employees to take time for childbirth recovery, to bond with their baby, establish breastfeeding routines, and adjust to life with a new child without threatening their family's economic well-being. We are grateful to Representative Underwood, Senator Smith, and all of the policymakers who have made it a priority to address gaps in the Family and Medical Leave Act.” - United States Breastfeeding Committee

Women Employed: “Thirty years after the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act, 59 percent of Illinois workers still cannot access unpaid leave, with Black and Latinx workers being 5 percent and 12 percent less likely to have access than white workers. The Job Protection Act will expand eligibility to ensure that more working women in Illinois can take the time they need to recover from serious illness, care for a family member, or welcome a new child. As we continue to work to build an America that leaves no one behind, we must push and expand policies that include everyone and consider not just the needs of workers today, but our future workforce as well. We are thankful to Congresswoman Underwood and Senator Smith for recognizing the need to expand FMLA and look forward to continuing to move toward a paid family and medical leave program in this country.” - Cherita Ellens, President and CEO of Women Employed

Workplace Fairness: “The past two years have shown us just how crucial job protection is to the success and safety of individuals, families and our economy. It's also important to note that women are especially impacted by lack of paid leave and gaps in FMLA due to their common role as both a caretaker and employee. Taking time off to care for yourself or a loved one

shouldn't put your livelihood at risk, and that's why Workplace Fairness supports the Job Protection Act." - Workplace Fairness

YWCA USA: "With only 56 percent of the U.S. workforce protected by FMLA, millions of workers, disproportionately women and women of color, are not eligible for job-protected leave and are forced to choose between their family or a paycheck," said Margaret Mitchell, CEO, YWCA USA. "The Job Protection Act introduced today recognizes the gaps in FMLA coverage and extends FMLA protections to ensure millions of women and families can take the time needed while having the peace of mind of returning to the workforce. While this bill is a critical step towards keeping women and women of color in the workforce, the lack of paid leave remains a significant barrier to true equity for the women we serve every day." - Margaret Mitchell, CEO, YWCA USA

1,000 Days: "Right now, nearly half of all workers-- disproportionately women, low-income people, and people of color-- do not have access to a single day of job-protected leave. This means that far too many parents and caregivers are unable to take time off from work to welcome a new child, to care for an ill loved one, or to attend to their own health needs, without risking retaliation or job loss. As we continue to fight for paid family and medical leave for all families in the 1,000-day window and beyond, fulfilling the promise of the Family and Medical Leave Act-- guaranteed, job protected leave for all workers who need it-- is a crucial step forward. 1,000 Days is proud to endorse the Job Protection Act and commends Congresswoman Underwood and Senator Smith for their leadership." - 1,000 Days