



Representative Peter Stark
239 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Stark,

We are writing to express our support of the Family Leave Insurance Act of 2008, a bill to provide paid leave for workers to care for their own serious health condition, to care for a family member with a serious health condition, to care for a new child, to address a family care situation that is the result of a family member's deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan, and to care for a qualifying military servicemember with a serious injury or illness. As organizations dedicated to ensuring that our nation's public policies address the realities and needs of today's working families, we applaud your leadership and attention to the needs of working families.

The Family Leave Insurance Act of 2008 is a necessary enhancement of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The passage of the FMLA was a landmark for workers in the United States. The law has enabled both women and men to better meet their work and family obligations without sacrificing their jobs. Yet we know from 15 years of experience that the FMLA is not enough. Too many workers cannot afford to take the unpaid leave it provides, and too many workers do not qualify for FMLA leave because of the high employer-size threshold, requirements regarding how long an employee must work for a specific employer, and its limited definition of family. The Family Leave Insurance Act of 2008 will correct many of these problems and will help millions of working families in the United States. The Act will bring us closer to the policies of most developed nations and will show that we truly value families.

The Family Leave Insurance Act of 2008 will make it possible for more workers, especially low income workers, to take necessary leave when they need it. This option will considerably improve the lives of workers and their families and allow parents to spend critical time with their new children. The graduated wage replacement available through the Act is a fair way to distribute funds in the insurance system and guarantees that those who are most likely to need paid leave have access to it.

The Family Leave Insurance Act of 2008 will help businesses as well as workers. Benefits like paid leave allow businesses to recruit and retain the best employees making them more competitive in the global economy. Yet, many businesses do not offer this benefit because they believe they cannot afford it. The Family Leave Insurance Act will make paid leave affordable for a wide range of businesses, including small businesses. It will also help employers save money in reduced turnover costs. Replacing a worker can cost as much as a quarter of their annual salary. Investing in workers by providing paid leave is not only the right thing to do; it is a wise investment for businesses.

On behalf of the families that will benefit from this legislation you have proposed, we want to thank you for your leadership on work and family issues.

Sincerely,

National Partnership for Women & Families
9to5, National Association of Working Women
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
American Association of People with Disabilities
AFL-CIO
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Black Women's Health Imperative
Business and Professional Women/ USA
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
DC Employment Justice Center
Family Voices-New Jersey
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Human Rights Campaign
Iowa Commission on the Status of Women
Interfaith Worker Justice
International Union, United Auto Workers
Labor Project for Working Families
Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center
Maine Women's Lobby
Missouri Women's Network
MomsRising.org
National Association of Mothers Centers, and its MOTHERS Initiative
National Association of Commissions for Women
National Center on Caregiving, Family Caregiver Alliance
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Respite Coalition
National Women's Health Network
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
New Prospect Life Center
New York State Paid Family Leave Coalition
Public Justice Center
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey
United American Nurses
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)
Voices for America's Children

Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
Women's Employment Rights Clinic, Golden Gate University School of Law
Women's Law Center of Maryland
Women's Law Project
Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment
Working America
Zero to Three
Voices for Vermont's Children
Legal Momentum