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**EDUCATION & LABOR COMMITTEE**

**Congressman George Miller, Chairman**

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Press Office, 202-226-0853

**Chairwoman Woolsey Statement At Subcommittee Hearing  
On Encouraging Family-Friendly Workplace Policies**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), chairwoman of the House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections Subcommittee for a subcommittee hearing on “Encouraging Family-Friendly Workplace Policies.”*

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I want to thank everyone for coming to this hearing on “Encouraging Family-Friendly Policies.” Balancing work and family is a very important issue for millions of workers in this country. And that is why the subcommittee is picking up where we left off last session when we had four hearings on balancing work and family.

Of course, this issue has taken new urgency in light of the current economic crisis. But before I proceed with my full opening statement, I want to make some introductions.

Representative Tom Price from the 6<sup>th</sup> district of Georgia has been a member of this subcommittee but now he is its ranking member. I want to welcome him and look forward to working with him on the important issues before this subcommittee.

I also want to thank Representative Joe Wilson from the 2<sup>nd</sup> district of South Carolina, who was a great ranking member. While I will miss him in that capacity, I am pleased that he remains a member of the subcommittee.

On the Democratic side, we are fortunate to have two new members of the subcommittee.

Representative Raul Grijalva of Arizona is no stranger to the Education and Labor Committee and has served on it with distinction. He is also my co-chair on the Progressive Caucus, and so I know that he is a great champion of working families.

Welcome, Representative Grijalva.

Gregorio Sablan, the first nonvoting delegate from the commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Delegate Sablan has served as Special Assistant for Management and Budget for the Islands’ Governor, and from 1982 to 1986, he served in the Northern Marianas House. In the 1980’s he worked as a special assistant to Senator Daniel Inouye of Hawaii.

Welcome Delegate Sablan to the subcommittee.

The financial crisis our country is facing is particularly devastating for workers. In January alone, we lost 598,000 jobs, pushing the unemployment rate to 7.6 percent, and it is worsening. Over 11.6 million Americans have lost their jobs.

And sadly, this is not the whole story.

7.8 million people are underemployed, which means they are working at part-time jobs either because their hours have been cut or because they are unable to find full-time work.

Moreover, 4.1 million people have given up looking for work altogether. So families are suffering badly.

Some people have no income, and others have to rely on one income when they were budgeted for two. And they can't always count on the remaining income because employer cut-backs continue.

Here's something surprising: more men are losing their jobs than women resulting in more women being responsible for the sole or major support of their families. And with women earning less than men (78 cents to every dollar earned by a man), men, women and families are living on less.

40 years ago I was a single-working mother, supporting 3 children.

So I know what it is like to constantly worry about the economic security of my family. Later as a human resource manager, I saw how important employee benefits---such as paid leave, paid sick days and health care---are to workers in both good times and bad.

And there is substantial evidence that they ultimately improve the bottom line of the employer.

We share President Obama's optimism that the recovery plan currently being implemented will get people back to work.

But in addition, we also need to pass legislation that will help to ease the burden on working families to balance their jobs and their family responsibilities.