MEDIA RELEASE
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FAMILY Act Moves One Step Closer to Helping Employees, Employers & Families
Business owner, worker and advocates testify for paid family leave

DENVER – The House Finance Committee today advanced the House Majority’s number one priority, a comprehensive paid family leave policy in Colorado.

House Bill 1001, the Colorado Family Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Act, creates a FAMLI division within the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, entirely funded and sustained through small $2-5 weekly employee contributions. Those who have worked at least 680 hours in the previous year will receive 66-95 percent wage replacement when they take leave for their own serious illness or temporary disability, to take care of an ill family member, for the birth or adoption of a new child, and for approved military family needs for up to 12 weeks per year.

“In today’s economy, parents have enough to struggle with and it’s time to ensure they have paid time off when emergencies come up, they have a new child, or a grandparent falls ill,” said Neha Mahajan, 9to5 Colorado executive director. “States can and should lead the way in creating paid family leave policies that work for families, for businesses, and for government.”

“While FAMLI allows my employee to care for her family’s health then return to focus on work without the stress of unpaid bills, it also allows me to reallocate the funds I’d pay her to cover temporary help while she’s out,” said Blake Manion, owner of Soul Salve and a member of Good Business Colorado, a new, nonpartisan business group working to promote a strong economy, thriving communities and a sustainable environment. “Given that FAMLI would help startups attract and retain employees and cost us nothing other than an initial payroll deduction set-up, FAMLI is a win-win for small business people like me.”

Jasmine White begged the committee to support FAMLI: “You need to understand the ripple effects that unpaid leave causes. I went through so much stress, anxiety and pressure because my [two] jobs had no paid leave. I had no income, and I didn’t have anything to fall back on. I was worried about not being able to provide for my daughters, I was scared of becoming homeless with two young kids, and I was terrified that child protective services would get involved if that happened. This is not right. No mother should have to worry that CPS will take their kids away because their jobs don’t provide paid family leave.”

“One in four mothers return to work within 10 days of giving birth,” said Erin Bennett Leighton, Campaign Director at MomsRising, a national organization with 25,000 Colorado members working to increase family economic security. “But studies have shown that longer leave periods are associated with health benefits for new mothers, including declines in depressive symptoms,
a reduction in the likelihood of severe depression, and improvement in overall health. In addition, time at home gives parents the time they need to breastfeed, attend well-child medical visits, and ensure that their children receive all necessary immunizations.”

The vote on HB18-1001 in the Finance Committee was 7-6 along party lines even though majorities of both Republicans and Democrats support paid leave.

The bill advances to the Appropriations Committee.

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