



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Announcing the Launch of the Family Care Campaign**

*Paid Family Medical Leave in PA to be considered by General Assembly*

**Harrisburg, PA, June 6, 2019** – The Family Care Campaign, a coalition of Pennsylvania organizations supporting the implementation of a paid family medical leave program in the Commonwealth, applauded yesterday’s announcement that a bipartisan, bicameral group of legislators will soon introduce the [Family Care Act](#) for consideration by the General Assembly.

Yesterday in the State Capitol, Senators Dan Laughlin (R-Erie) and Maria Collett (D-Bucks, Montgomery) spoke to the need for Pennsylvania employees to have time to care for their families at critical moments.

“As the American workforce continues to change in the 21st century global marketplace, our state policies should evolve to serve their growing needs as well,” said Laughlin. “In Pennsylvania, businesses will encourage their employees to put families first, and this is extremely important to me.”

“It’s time that we in the legislature help ensure that employees throughout the Commonwealth have the tools they need to thrive in the workplace,” said Collett. “It will give hardworking Pennsylvanians the ability to invest small deductions from their weekly earnings into a state-managed fund so that when they need to take time off to care for themselves or a loved one, they can retain their jobs and remain financially secure.”

Joined by dozens of coalition partners, yesterday’s announcement served as the official launch of the Family Care Campaign. Noting that the fastest growing age group in Pennsylvania is the 85 and older population, AARP State President Joanne Grossi said, “At AARP, we believe paid family leave policies are a sound investment, from both the perspective of employers and Pennsylvania’s working families. Workers should not have to choose between keeping their jobs and providing care to a seriously ill family member.”

Also announcing their support and intentions to introduce companion legislation in the House was Representatives Wendi Thomas (R-Bucks) and Dan Miller (D-Allegheny).

“Most Americans cannot sustain their families for more than 2 weeks without a paycheck,” said Thomas. “The Family Care Act is a simple, well-tested mechanism. Similar state insurance funds are already in place in New York and New Jersey, both states that border Pennsylvania and attract workers away from our state. To attract and keep workers, we need policies that help young families, yet do not place pressure on the state budget.”

“It is time for our government to act and pass a bill that’s going to make sure that you will not be wiped out because of medical bankruptcy bills,” said Miller. “Whether you are from the advocate

side or whether you are the Chamber of Commerce in this state, you know this is right, you know this is needed. We need this bill to happen.”

The legislation will also specifically address the needs of national guard and reserve family members who deal with multiple and lengthy deployments.

“Most of the veterans and family members that we serve at Veterans Leadership Program find themselves struggling or in a crisis situation,” said Patti Gerhauser, Women Veterans Program Coordinator for the Veterans Leadership Program. “This problem can be in part due to health problems and economic insecurity that can be compounded by a lack of paid family leave. I am very encouraged to see our State Representatives come together by taking bipartisan action to pass comprehensive paid family and medical leave.”

If passed, the Family Care Act **would make Pennsylvania the 8th state to implement a state-managed insurance fund** that will provide paid family leave benefits for all its workers. Only 14% of the U.S. workforce currently has access to any type of paid family leave, with just 6% of the lowest wage earners receiving paid family leave compared to 22% of top sector earners.

The Family Care Campaign’s co-founders, the Women and Girls Foundation and PathWays PA, applauded the leadership of the bill’s sponsors. “We are grateful to have found strong champions in Representatives Thomas and Miller, Senators Laughlin and Collett,” said Heather Arnet, CEO of the Women and Girls Foundation. “Each of them has experienced firsthand how important it is for families to have the ability to care for aging parents, new infants and children with disabilities. As state legislators they have access to these benefits and feel passionately that it is the right thing to do to ensure that all of their constituents do as well.”

Marianne Bellesorte, Vice President of Advocacy at PathWays PA, said, “Businesses and employees across Pennsylvania want a paid family leave policy that works for employers, workers, and families in Pennsylvania. The Family Care Act is based on a model that successfully exists in states across the country and we are excited to make it a reality in Pennsylvania.”

To view the press conference in full, please visit: [pasen.wistia.com/medias/8f62809tsl](https://pasen.wistia.com/medias/8f62809tsl).

### **About The Family Care Campaign**

*The Family Care Campaign is a statewide coalition of organizations united behind the need to support hardworking families that are simply doing their best to take care of loved ones. The coalition is supported by The Women and Girls Foundation and PathWays PA. To learn more about the Family Care Campaign, please visit us at [www.familycareact.com](http://www.familycareact.com) or on our [YouTube channel](#).*