



Paid Family Leave **Legislative Toolkit**

Conservatives have long known that the key to strong community is strong families. Paid Family Leave, after the birth or adoption of a new baby, fits our priorities and values. This kit explains the details and why it is a winning issue from both a policy perspective and with public opinion.





PAID FAMILY LEAVE FACT SHEET 3

Learn the statistics about Paid Family Leave.



CONSERVATIVE PAID FAMILY LEAVE LEGISLATION 6

There are several conservative legislative plans introduced in Congress that support paid family leave after the birth or adoption of a child. Learn the details and how they fit our values.



EFFECTIVE MESSAGING 9

We show the many ways to talk about paid family leave including how most workers don't have access, how it improves health and welfare of children, keeps parents off public assistance, increases father's involvement, helps budget by increasing birthrate, reduces abortion, and more.



WHAT CONSERVATIVE LEADERS ARE SAYING 13

Read quotes from Senators Mike Lee, Marco Rubio, Joni Ernst, and Bill Cassidy and former Governor Mike Huckabee, former Senator Rick Santorum and others.



POLLING SUMMARY 16

Support for paid family leave now crosses all party, gender, and ideological lines and has support among all ethnicities. It appears to be a winning issue for all legislators, even Republicans from very conservative districts.



LEGISLATOR HANDOUT 18

Template for legislators to use in creating handout to communicate support for Paid Family Leave to constituents.



PAID LEAVE IN THE NEWS 19

National and State-based articles on Paid Family Leave.



PAID FAMILY LEAVE FACT SHEET



paid family
leave

Learn more at
www.PaidLeaveForFamilies.com

Imagine if all families could welcome a newborn or adopted child by spending the first few months together bonding as a family. What kind of impact could that have on their future?

THE NEED:

- Only 23% of workers (9% of low-wage workers) have access to paid family leave after the birth or adoption of a child¹
- 64% of households with children have both parents working²
- 25% of households with children are headed by a single parent³
- 23% of all mothers go back to work within two weeks of giving birth⁴
- Nearly 40 of Americans cannot cover an unexpected \$400 expense⁵

HELPS FEDERAL BUDGET:

- Could increase future taxpayers by reversing the plummeting birthrate of 1.64 live births per woman, the lowest level ever recorded (need 2.1 in order to maintain taxpayer population)⁶

PRO-LIFE:

- Supports pro-life choices as most women who have abortions cite the inability to afford a child as a key determinant in their decision⁷

IMPORTANCE OF BONDING:

- Studies show that early bonding is crucial for the long-term mental health and resilience of children⁸
- Fathers also produce the love hormone “oxytocin” when with their baby those first few weeks, leading to them being more involved in childrearing later⁹

HEALTH OF BABY:

- 10 weeks of paid maternal leave was associated with a 10% lower infant mortality rate¹⁰
- Babies with mothers at home are more likely to be breastfed and have regular doctors’ visits¹¹

INFANT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT:

- Infants with increased activity of higher-frequency brain waves were 7.39 times more likely to have mothers with paid leave¹²
- Babies whose mothers received three months of paid leave have more complex brain wave patterns¹³

HEALTH OF MOTHER:

- Women with at least 12 weeks of paid leave reported fewer depressive symptoms and better mental and physical health¹⁴

KEEPS MOTHERS OFF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND CONNECTED TO WORKFORCE:

- 48% with household incomes under \$30,000 go on public assistance after the birth of a baby¹⁵
- After taking paid leave, mothers are 39% less likely to go on public assistance and 40% less likely to need food stamps¹⁶
- Women who had access to PFL at the time of the birth are more likely to be in the labor force up to five years after that birth¹⁷

BENEFITS BUSINESSES:

- 90% employers reported a positive impact or no impact from introduction of paid leave policies¹⁸
- A federal PFL plan would help employers with worker retention and recruitment of employees while increasing worker productivity

PUBLIC SUPPORT:

- 71% of registered voters support paid leave for parents, crossing party, gender, and ideological lines (65% of conservatives, 68% of moderates, 83% of liberals)¹⁹
- Hispanic voters, who are critical to building winning coalitions, support paid leave at 80%, with 53% supporting strongly²⁰

FITS CONSERVATIVE VALUES:

- No mandates on business, fiscally responsible, optional.

Footnotes:

1 [“National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States.”](#) 2021. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

2 [“Employment Characteristics of Families.”](#) 2022. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

3 Bureau, U. C. (2023, March 8). [National Single Parent Day: March 21, 2023.](#) *Census.gov.*

4 Paquette, Danielle. 2015. [“The Shocking Number of New Moms Who Return to Work Two Weeks after Childbirth.”](#) *The Washington Post.*

5 Daniel, W. (2023, May 24). [“Turbulence Ahead”: Nearly 4 in 10 Americans lack enough money to cover a \\$400 emergency expense, fed survey shows.](#) *Fortune.*

6 [“Why Is the U.S. Birth Rate Declining?”](#) 2021. *Population Reference Bureau.*

7 Boonstra, Heather D. 2018. [“Abortion in the Lives of Women Struggling Financially: Why Insurance Coverage Matters.”](#) *Guttmacher Institute.*

8 Winston, Robert, and Rebecca Chicot. 2016. [“The Importance of Early Bonding on the Long-Term Mental Health and Resilience of Children.”](#) *London Journal of Primary Care.*

9 Boyle, Alan, Science Editor, and NBC News. 2013. [“This Is Your Brain on Fatherhood: Dads Experience Hormonal Changes Too, Research Shows.”](#) *NBCNews.com.*

10 Heymann, Jody, Amy Raub, and Alison Earle. 2011. [“Creating and Using New Data Sources to Analyze the Relationship between Social Policy and Global Health: the Case of Maternal Leave.”](#) *Public Health Reports.*

11 Berger, Lawrence M., Jennifer Hill, and Jane Waldfogel. 2005. [“Maternity Leave, Early Maternal Employment and Child Health and Development in the US.”](#) *Wiley Online Library.*

12 Brito, Natalie, David Werchan, Annie Brandes-Aitkens et al. 2022. "[Paid maternal leave is associated with infant brain function at 3 months of age.](#)" *Society for Research in Child Development*.

13 ibib

14 Chatterji, Pinka, and Sara Markowitz. 2012. "[Family Leave After Childbirth and the Mental Health of New Mothers.](#)" *The Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics*.

15 Stepler, Renee. 2017. "[U.S. Views on Paid Family and Medical Leave: Key Findings.](#)" *Pew Research Center*.

16 McGuire, Ashley E. 2018. "[Perspective. How Conservatives Are Poised to Actually Make Paid Family Leave a Reality.](#)" *The Washington Post*.

17 Jones, Kelly. "[Paid Family Leave Increases Mothers' Labor Market Attachment.](#)" *IWPR*, 28 Oct. 2021.

19 Bartle, Ann, Charles Baum, and Maya Rossin-Slater. 2014. "[California's Paid Family Leave Law: Lessons from the First Decade.](#)" *U.S. Department of Labor*.

19 Anderson, Kristen Soltis. 2020. "[The Voters' Policy Preference on Paid Family Leave.](#)" *Echelon Insights on behalf of Ethics and Public Policy*.

20 ibib



CONSERVATIVE PAID FAMILY LEAVE LEGISLATION

Several plans have been introduced in the past that support parents after the birth or adoption of a child. It is encouraging to see these innovative plans that are fiscally responsible, do not put mandates on businesses, and are completely optional.

CHILD TAX CREDIT PLANS

Advancing Support for Working Families Act

Sponsored by Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) and Representatives Elise Stefanik (R-NY) and Colin Allred (D-TX). Introduced in 2019, planning to reintroduce in the Senate.

The bipartisan Advancing Support for Working Families Act¹ allows parents to advance \$5,000 from their Child Tax Credit (CTC) upon the birth or adoption of a child to be used for paid leave, childcare, or any other cost. In that respect, it is not a traditional paid family leave plan. Today, parents can claim an annual CTC on their taxes of up to \$2,000 for each child under age 17. Under this plan, parents would have the option to advance that \$5,000 and then repay by reducing their annual CTC by \$500 over each of the following 10 years. Enrollment in this plan would be optional.

Support Working Families Act

Sponsored by Senator Todd Young (R-IN). Introduced in 2019.

The Support Working Families Act² is similar to the Advancing Support for Working Families Act in offering a refundable Child Tax Credit (CTC), but it is specifically for those who take leave from employment following the birth or adoption of a child. They would be allowed to advance up to \$6,000.

SOCIAL SECURITY PLANS

The New Parents Act

Sponsored by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Mitt Romney (R-IA) and Representatives Ann Wagner (R-MO) and Dan Crenshaw (R-TX). Introduced in 2019 and reintroduced in the Senate in 2021. Rubio also included The New Parent Act in his pro-family framework Providing for Life Act announced in June 2022 and reintroduced in January 2023 (listed below).

The Child Rearing and Development Leave Empowerment (CRADLE) Act

Plan announced by Senators Joni Ernst (R-IA) and Mike Lee (R-UT) in 2019, but not yet submitted as legislation.

Both The New Parents Act³ and The Child Rearing and Development Leave Empowerment (CRADLE) Act⁴ allow new parents to receive one, two, or three months of paid leave benefits after the birth or adoption of a child. They would then delay activating retirement benefits administered by the Social Security Administration for two, four, or six months. Senator Rubio's plan would also allow parents to transfer benefits between each other. Both plans have certain work-history requirements but stay-at-home parents who have past substantial work history would be eligible as well. Both plans are optional.

TAX CREDITS FOR EMPLOYERS

Strong Families Act - already passed and implemented

Sponsored by Senators Deb Fischer (R-NE) and Angus King (I-ME) and Representatives Mike Kelly (R-PA) and Terri Sewell (D-AL). Introduced in 2017 and incorporated in President Trump's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act for a two-year pilot. Was expanded for 5 years in the 2020 year-end COVID-relief and spending package.

The bipartisan Strong Families Act⁵ created a five-year, 25 percent tax credit for employers who voluntarily offer up to 12 weeks of paid family leave to employees. It is available to men or women and both salaried and hourly employees. This leave is available to care for a newborn, newly adopted or foster child, for a family member with a serious health condition, and to recover from a serious health condition.

PROPOSALS TO INCREASE BENEFITS THROUGH EMPLOYERS

Working Families Flexibility Act (Overtime Pay)

The Working Families Flexibility Act,⁶ originally proposed by former Congresswoman Martha Roby (R-AL) and most recently reintroduced by Representative Mary Miller (R-IL) and Senator Mike Lee (R-UT), would allow workers to accrue paid time off for working overtime in lieu of additional pay. In particular, it would allow employers to offer workers the option to receive time-and-a-half paid time off rather than time-and-a-half pay for any overtime hours worked. An employee would be able to accrue up to 160 hours of paid time off each year and the employer would be required to provide monetary compensation for any unused paid leave. A similar proposal was also included in the Protecting Worker Paychecks and Family Choice Act,⁷ a series of paid family leave proposals released by GOP members of the House Ways and Means Committee.

Working Parents Flexibility Act (Savings Accounts)

The Working Parents Flexibility Act,⁸ originally proposed by Representative John Katko (R-NY) and then-Representative Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), would allow employers to offer workers the option to divert a portion of their pretax earnings into a parental leave savings account similar to a 401(k) retirement savings account. Within one year of the birth or adoption of a child, workers would be able to withdraw funds (tax-free) from the account in order to pay for expenses associated with welcoming a new child. So, if a new parent goes on leave, rather than receiving a paid benefit from their employer or the government, they could rely on their own savings in this account. A similar proposal was also included in the Protecting Worker Paychecks and Family Choice Act,⁹ a series of paid family leave proposals released by GOP members of the House Ways and Means Committee.

PRO-FAMILY LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Providing for Life Act

The Providing for Life Act¹⁰ was introduced by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) following the U.S. Supreme Court decision on Dobbs. This legislation combines his previous paid leave legislation, The New Parents Act, and other existing Rubio legislation with new, pro-family proposals to provide comprehensive support for pregnant

and new moms, as well as their young children. Rubio released the framework for the legislation in June 2022. In addition to The New Parents Act, it also includes a child tax credit expansion, expanded tax relief for adoptive parents, improving Child Support Enforcement Programs, workforce training for non-custodial parents, child support to cover pregnancy costs, the Pregnant Students' Rights Act, the Community Mentors for Moms Act, the Lifting Local Communities Act, Standing with Moms Act, WIC reform, and Life-Affirming Healthcare for Mothers Act.

Footnotes:

1. [Stefanik, Allred, Cassidy, Sinema, introduce bipartisan bill supporting parents in critical first year following births, adoptions](#). Congresswoman Elise Stefanik. (2019, December 4).
2. [S.2437 - Support Working Families Act 116th Congress](#) (2019-2020). (n.d.).
3. [Rubio, Romney reintroduce bill giving new parents option for paid leave](#). U.S. Senator for Florida, Marco Rubio. (2021, September 15).
4. [Senators Ernst, Lee put forward paid parental leave plan that is budget neutral and flexible for parents](#). Mike Lee US Senator for Utah. (2019, September 5).
5. United States Senator Deb Fischer for Nebraska. (2017, March 14). "[The bipartisan strong families act is a paid leave solution that can pass](#)." Fischer.
6. [Working family flexibility](#). Mike Lee US Senator for Utah. (2021, February 4).
7. Camp, L. (2021, May 27). [Brady, Walorski unveil New Family Leave and Child Care Package](#). House Committee on Ways and Means.
8. [Katko bill would establish tax-free savings accounts for parents](#). Ripon Advance. (n.d.).
9. Camp, L. (2021a, May 27). [Brady, Walorski unveil New Family Leave and Child Care Package](#). House Committee on Ways and Means.
10. [Rubio Introduces pro-Family Plan for a "Post-roe" America](#). U.S. Senator for Florida, Marco Rubio. (2022, September 15).



EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

On Paid Family Leave

It is easy to talk about paid family leave (PFL) because of its popularity with Republicans and Democrats as well as its many benefits to families and society. While PFL has many applications – parental leave following the birth or adoption of a new child, family caregiving leave to care for a loved one, or personal medical leave – parental leave is very popular with conservatives and an important policy to advance in the pro-family agenda. Depending on the audience and what resonates the most personally, one can choose a few of the topics below to make a strong argument in support of this important policy.

MOST WORKERS DO NOT HAVE PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

Strong families are the key to strong communities. Currently, only 23% of Americans (9% of low wage workers) have access to PFL after the birth or adoption of a child.¹ Because of this, a quarter of all mothers go back to work within 10-14 days after having a child, with fathers going back even sooner.² A federal PFL policy would ensure that all families have time together after the birth or adoption of a new child, giving every family the best opportunity to start off strong.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IMPROVES THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN.

Studies show that children who are deprived of early bonding with parents have negative physical and mental health outcomes.³ PFL allows time together as a family, regardless of income, so every child develops strong bonds with their parents. In addition, having ten weeks of PFL was associated with a 10% lower neonatal and infant mortality rate.⁴ With mothers at home, children are also more likely to be breastfed and have regular doctors' visits.⁵ Children benefit by having their parents home those first few months of life.

INFANT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IMPACTED BY PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

Research shows that infants with increased activity of higher-frequency brain waves were 7.39 times more likely to have mothers with paid leave.⁶ Infants whose mothers received three months of paid leave also had more complex brain wave patterns. Those first few months are especially important for brain development as the neural connections in the infant brain emerge with warm, predictable, and responsive social interactions with their parents. The infant brain is highly plastic, adapting to the environment but also susceptible to negative experiences like parental stress.⁷ There are life-long benefits for infants who have parents home those first few months.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE KEEPS PARENTS OFF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND CONNECTED TO WORKFORCE.

Some new parents are forced out of the workforce and onto public assistance in order to spend time together during those first few months after the birth of a new baby.⁸ Research confirms that mothers who have PFL

are 39% less likely to receive public assistance and 40% less likely to use food stamps.⁹ Women who had access to PFL at the time of the birth are 3% to 6% more likely to be in the labor force up to five years after that birth, representing a 20-50 percent reduction in maternal labor market detachment.¹⁰ PFL keeps workers connected to the workforce and ready to return when their leave is over, increasing positive outcomes for the mother and the child. Since the parents continue to be taxpayers instead of government aid recipients, this also has a positive impact on the federal budget.

STUDIES SHOW INCREASED INVOLVEMENT OF FATHERS BECAUSE OF PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

Research indicates that even fathers produce the “love hormone” oxytocin that mothers produce when in close contact with a new child, creating strong, lifelong bonds.¹¹ Other studies show that fathers who take PFL are more likely to be involved in child rearing. Then, children with highly involved fathers perform better in cognitive tests.¹² It is clear that families and society benefit when fathers and children have time to develop strong bonds at the beginning of a child’s life.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS PRO-LIFE AND REDUCES ABORTION.

Most women seeking abortions cite cost as the main determining factor and how that would interfere with work, school, or the ability to care for other children. In addition, 49% of those seeking an abortion live below the federal poverty level,¹³ where only 9% have access to PFL.¹⁴ Imagine having a PFL policy that promotes life by supporting a mother to stay home and care for her newborn.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE HELPS THE FEDERAL BUDGET BY INCREASING BIRTHRATE.

The number of babies born in the United States just hit the lowest rate in the past 30 years, at 1.64 live births per woman, a sharp decline from the rate of 2.12 in 2007.¹⁵ In order to maintain our population and taxpayer base, we need a replacement rate of 2.1.¹⁶ Surveys show that women’s preference for childbearing would produce a birthrate of 2.7.¹⁷ Having a federal PFL policy would go far towards supporting families to have the number of children they desire.

THE ECONOMY HAS CHANGED, FAMILY-WAGE JOBS ARE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN FOR YOUNG PARENTS.

In previous generations, most full-time jobs paid enough to raise a family. Currently, family-wage jobs are more difficult to find, especially for young workers. 44% of all workers are considered “low wage,” earning an annual salary of \$18,000 with an hourly wage of \$10.22.¹⁸ The Federal Reserve has reported that nearly 40% of Americans are unable to afford a \$400 emergency, with 17% unable to pay all their bills in full each month.¹⁹ A federal PFL policy ensures that a new child is not a financial catastrophe, regardless of income or age of parents.

GOP SUPPORTED PAID FAMILY LEAVE PLANS ARE FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE.

Republicans have taken a lead in introducing conservative plans to support families. Senators Marco Rubio and Mitt Romney along with Representatives Ann Wagner and Dan Crenshaw introduced The New Parents Act in 2019, which was introduced again in the Senate in 2021.²⁰ Senators Mike Lee and Joni Ernst announced a similar plan called The Child Rearing and Development Leave Empowerment (CRADLE) Act in 2019.²¹ Both of these plans allow parents to withdraw Social Security benefits to stay home after the birth or adoption of a new child and then pay the cost back by simply retiring a few months later than they would have otherwise. The first bipartisan plan, The Advancing Support for Working Families Act, was also introduced in 2019 by Senators Bill Cassidy and Kyrsten Sinema.²² This plan allows new parents to receive \$5000, and then reduce their Child Tax Credit (CTC) deduction on their federal taxes by \$500 annually over the course of 10 years in order to pay it back. Senator Todd Young introduced a similar bill using CTC specifically to fund leave after the birth or adoption of a child. In 2017, Senators Deb Fischer and Angus King and Representatives Mike Kelly and Terri Sewell introduced legislation offering a 25% tax credit for businesses offering leave. That was incorporated into President Trump’s Tax Cuts and Job Act for a two-year trial, which was expanded by five years in the 2020 year-end COVID-relief and spending package. Since there are so many benefits to

having a federal PFL policy, these plans offer a strong return on investment by strengthening families without adding to the budget deficit.

THERE IS WIDE SUPPORT FOR PAID FAMILY LEAVE, EVEN AMONG THE MOST CONSERVATIVE AUDIENCES.

Multiple polls has shown that PFL has broad support (71%) that crosses party, gender, and ideological lines with support coming from conservatives (65%), moderates (68%), liberals (83%) and all ethnicities.²³ In fact, 58% of conservatives and 53% of GOP primary voters believe that some sort of benefit ought to be available to parents after the birth or adoption of a child. Hispanic voters, who are critical to building winning coalitions, support paid leave at 80%, with 53% supporting strongly. Paid leave is no longer a controversial issue, rather one that resonates with a plurality of voters.²⁴

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS AND THE ECONOMY.

Business owners have become advocates for a federal PFL policy because it would help them to reduce costs and level the playing field for businesses of all sizes. Employers also know that providing supportive programs like PFL will help them with worker retention and the recruitment of employees while increasing worker productivity.²⁵ Nearly 90 percent of employers in California have reported a positive impact or no impact from the introduction of a state plan.²⁶ There is now broad support in the business community for a federal paid family leave plan.

Footnotes:

1. [“National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States.”](#) 2021. *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*.
2. Paquette, Danielle. 2015. [“The Shocking Number of New Moms Who Return to Work Two Weeks after Childbirth.”](#) *The Washington Post*.
3. Winston, Robert, and Rebecca Chicot. 2016. [“The Importance of Early Bonding on the Long-Term Mental Health and Resilience of Children.”](#) *London journal of primary care*.
4. Heymann, Jody, Amy Raub, and Alison Earle. 2011. [“Creating and Using New Data Sources to Analyze the Relationship between Social Policy and Global Health: the Case of Maternal Leave.”](#) *Public Health Reports*.
5. Berger, Lawrence M., Jennifer Hill, and Jane Waldfogel. 2005. [“Maternity Leave, Early Maternal Employment and Child Health and Development in the US.”](#) *Wiley Online Library*.
6. Brito, Natalie, David Werchan, Annie Brandes-Aitkens et al. 2022. [“Paid maternal leave is associated with infant brain function at 3 months of age.”](#) *Society for Research in Child Development*.
7. Ibid.
8. [“To Grow Our Economy, Start with Paid Leave.”](#) 2019. *Cato Institute*.
9. McGuire, Ashley E. 2018. [“Perspective. How Conservatives Are Poised to Actually Make Paid Family Leave a Reality.”](#) *The Washington Post*.
10. Jones, Kelly. [“Paid Family Leave Increases Mothers’ Labor Market Attachment.”](#) *IWPR*, 28 Oct. 2021,
11. Boyle, Alan, Science Editor, and NBC News. 2013. [“This Is Your Brain on Fatherhood: Dads Experience Hormonal Changes Too, Research Shows.”](#) *NBCNews.com*.

12. Huerta, Maria, Willem Adema, and Jennifer Baxter. 2013. "[Fathers' Leave, Fathers' Involvement and Child Development.](#)" *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*. doi: 10.1787/5k4dlw9w6czq-en.
13. Boonstra, Heather D. 2018. "[Abortion in the Lives of Women Struggling Financially: Why Insurance Coverage Matters.](#)" *Guttmacher Institute*.
14. "[National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States.](#)" 2021. *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*.
15. "[Why Is the U.S. Birth Rate Declining?](#)" 2021. *Population Reference Bureau*.
16. Stone, Lyman. 2018. "[American Women Are Having Fewer Children Than They'd Like.](#)" *The New York Times*.
17. Ibid.
18. Ross, Martha, and Nicole Bateman. 2019. "[Low-Wage Work Is More Pervasive than You Think, and There Aren't Enough 'Good Jobs' to Go Around.](#)" *Brookings*.
19. Daniel, W. (2023, May 24). "[Turbulence Ahead](#)": Nearly 4 in 10 Americans lack enough money to cover a \$400 emergency expense, fed survey shows. *Fortune*.
20. "[Rubio, Romney, Wagner, Crenshaw Introduce Bill Giving Parents an Option for Paid Family Leave.](#)" 2019. *U.S. Senator for Florida, Marco Rubio*.
21. Lee, Mike. 2019. "[Sens. Ernst, Lee Put Forward Paid Parental Leave Plan That Is Budget Neutral and Flexible for Parents.](#)" *Press Release*.
22. "[Cassidy, Sinema, Allred, Stefanik Introduce Bipartisan Bill Supporting Parents in Critical First Year Following Births, Adoptions: U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana](#)" 2019. *Press Release. U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana*
23. Anderson, Kristen Soltis. 2020. "[The Voters' Policy Preference on Paid Family Leave.](#)" *Echelon Insights on behalf of Ethics and Public Policy*.
24. "Anderson, Kristen Soltis. 2022. Echelon Insights Polling.
NO LINK
25. [Paid Family and Medical Leave: Good for Business.](#) *National Partnership for Women & Families*. (2023, May 2).
26. Bartle, Ann, Charles Baum, and Maya Rossin-Slater. 2014. "[California's Paid Family Leave Law: Lessons from the First Decade.](#)" *U.S. Department of Labor*.



WHAT CONSERVATIVE LEADERS ARE SAYING

In Support of Paid Family Leave

“American families are the heart, soul, and backbone of our nation. Strong and loving families build up our neighborhoods, sustain our communities, invigorate our cities, pass down our values, and make a brighter future for every citizen...It’s time to pass Paid Family Leave...”

— [President Trump: White House Summit on Child Care and Paid Leave](#) (President Trump has mentioned his support for paid family leave in every joint address to Congress since taking office in 2017.)

“Congress is considering what should be a non-partisan Paid Family Leave bill that would be of great help to families and a genuine recognition that the next generation needs their parents in the earliest months of birth or adoption, and the parents need to be able to focus on that new family member to bond with the child, develop healthy routines, and take care of the myriad of responsibilities that come with an addition to the family. Paid Family Leave is not a government “give-away” but simply affirms that the stress of being a new parent is a burden for the employer as well as the employee. We should honor and reward those who are creating and “training our replacements” and the PFL is an important part of that.”

— [Mike Huckabee, Former Governor of Arkansas](#)

“Republicans need to roll up their sleeves, reach across the aisle, and get a new federal paid leave policy enacted. Paid parental leave is good policy and good politics.”

— [Rick Santorum, former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania](#)

“Our economic policies have left young, working families behind at a time when our marriage and childbirth rates are falling. It is time to realign our economic policies in support of American families...” — [Senator Marco Rubio \(R-FL\)](#) introducing his New Parents Act legislation The problems stemming from financial insecurity around having kids, such as increased debt, welfare receipt, reduced birth weight and negative cognitive outcomes for children and increased family instability are increasingly concentrated among middle- and working-class moms and dads — the backbone of our country...It makes it harder for young Americans to start families and weakens the family — the bedrock institution of our society.”

— [Senator Marco Rubio \(R-Florida\), USA Today](#)

“I am leading efforts to create a policy that gives parents the flexibility to pursue a career and raise a family. This policy must be fiscally sustainable and not bury taxpayers in even more red ink. We will find a bipartisan solution that empowers families and business owners to succeed.”

— [Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D., \(R-Louisiana\)](#)

“There is no bigger kitchen table issue than a mother and a father being able to care for their newborn. In many cases, the first year of life is the most expensive for a family. This legislation addresses this, focuses resources, and eases financial strain to provide a longer bonding period for the family. As a doctor, I know that if a mom and dad are able to have a deeper connection with their child at birth, it’s better for the health of the baby and the mother. We don’t raise taxes, affect Social Security, and there are no mandates on either the family or the employer. This is a common ground solution that can pass Congress and become law.”

– Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D., (R-Louisiana)

“Developing solutions to help new parents and working families thrive in this modern workforce is necessary for the continued economic success of our nation and the well-being of the next generation of Americans.

– Representative Elise Stefanik (R, New York)

“It’s past time we modernize our family leave policies to reflect the evolving needs of today’s workforce and to reduce the barriers that pose challenges for parents balancing family and work... Our proposal is a path forward for a budget-neutral paid leave option that gives parents greater flexibility without imposing a new government entitlement or mandate.”

– Senator Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), on the introduction of The Cradle Act

“Families are the bedrock of our society. If young people can’t afford to marry and start a family, then the American dream literally has no future.”

– Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah)

“It’s a practical, conservative solution for America’s families. It’s a smart, policy that enables families to make their own financial planning decisions.”

– Representative Ann Wagner (R-Missouri)

“We are here to come to some sort of bipartisan solution, and for once, get this done.”

– Representative Stephanie Bice (R-Oklahoma)

“We as a conference have talked a lot about pro-family initiatives and supporting families, and this is one of the ways we can do that. The time is now – thirty years is too long.”

– Representative Stephanie Bice (R-Oklahoma)

“Families are forced to choose between their financial well-being and the well-being of their child,” Crenshaw wrote in a tweet. “That’s wrong. Let’s fix it.”

– Representative Dan Crenshaw (R-Texas)

“Strong families are the building blocks of society. Every economic policy we promote should be centered around encouraging people to get married and have as many kids as they want to have. That’s why we support paid family leave — we believe we should do everything we can to prevent career commitments and financial constraints from limiting the growth of families.”

– Terry Schilling, President of American Principles Project

“As an employer of more than 90 employees, all within child-bearing age, this plan would help me as well as help my employees prepare for the births of their own children.”

– Kristen Hawkins, President of Students for Life

“Protecting American parents at work is protecting the families they nurture. This includes finding a politically viable paid family leave policy, as well as a range of other labor and workplace reforms that would protect parents. Fewer than one in five American workers have access to paid family leave after the birth or adoption of a child, and the

number drops below one in 10 for low-wage workers. That is despite research showing that mothers and children are vastly better off with paid leave available to them in some way, both in simple physical terms and in less immediately tangible long-term emotional and psychological terms. Fewer babies die, fewer mothers suffer depression and children even perform better in school as teenagers.”

– Timothy R. Head, Executive Director of Faith & Freedom Coalition

“Babies need to bond with their parents, especially their mothers. To facilitate this bonding, Congress should pass legislation giving mothers and fathers paid parental leave to be at home with their infants in the first few weeks of their child’s life. Given the physical demands of pregnancy, this leave should be especially generous for mothers.”

– Brad Wilcox, Future of Freedom Fellow, Institute for Family Studies

“In their work, all policymakers should be keeping the needs of families first and foremost. A sound paid leave approach can provide support to parents, especially those welcoming a new life, and recognize that strong families are the cornerstone of a healthy society.”

–Patrick T. Brown, Fellow at Ethics and Public Policy Center

“Family is one of the core pillars of the Hispanic community. Paid Family Leave prioritizes and strengthens the critical bonds that mothers and fathers need with their children as well as helps make family formation more affordable and stable.”

–Samuel Rodriguez, President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

“It should be the birthright of all American children — whether planned or unplanned, born into a high- or low-income household — to spend their first weeks and months of life with their mother and father. That’s currently out of reach for far too many families because they lack job protection and/or access to paid leave. If changing this isn’t the embodiment of family values for conservatives in politics, I’m not sure what is.”

– Abby McCloskey, Founder of McCoskey Policy LLC

“Hispanic communities stand with Biblical values that promote faith and family. We need policies like paid family leave that reflect and honor our community and values.”

–Kathryn Jean Lopez, Editor-at-Large at National Review

“In their work, all policymakers should be keeping the needs of families first and foremost. A sound paid leave approach can provide support to parents, especially those welcoming a new life, and recognize that strong families are the cornerstone of a healthy society.”

–Nadine Maenza, Senior Advisor at Patriot Voices

“Hispanic communities stand with Biblical values that promote faith and family. We need policies like paid family leave that reflect and honor our community and values.”

– Carlos Duran, President of the National Hispanic Pastors Alliance

“Paid Family Leave is an excellent idea that proposes providing wages to individuals when they need to temporarily take leave from work to care for family members. This would empower people to attend to personal needs or family obligations without compromising their financial stability. This is precisely the type of support we give our members in Washington, DC and it is only fair that we offer the same to hard-working Americans in this nation!”

–Tony Lowden, Pastor of Jabez Ministries



POLLING SUMMARY

Paid family leave is a winning issue with Republicans and conservatives

Paid family leave is widely supported by swing voters, and even by conservatives, Trump voters, and GOP primary voters.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS WIDELY SUPPORTED BY CONSERVATIVE WOMEN, REPUBLICANS OVER 55 AND KEY SWING VOTERS, INCLUDING HISPANICS.

- In a [national survey](#) conducted December 3-8, 2022 by the Tarrance Group and Lake Research, 80% of all voters favored providing workers with access to paid family leave. This includes 62% of **Republicans**, 68% of **conservative women** and 70% for **Republicans over 55**. In addition, the survey showed that 78% of **Independents** support paid leave, as do 85% of **Hispanic men** and 95% of **Hispanic women**.

CRITICAL VOTER GROUPS SAY THAT PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE TO THEM AS THEY CONSIDER FOR WHOM THEY WILL VOTE, ACCORDING TO A NATIONAL ECHELON INSIGHTS SURVEY TAKEN MARCH 18-21, 2022:

- **Hispanic voters** are almost twice as likely as other voters to say paid family leave is a major or top issue for them when deciding for whom to vote. They strongly agree that paid family leave should be available to parents, with **80% of Hispanic respondents agreeing** (and 48% strongly agreeing) that such benefits should be available.
- Half of all **moms** in the survey consider paid family leave to be a major or top issue. This is twice as many who consider paid family leave to be important compared to those in the sample survey without kids in the home.

CONSERVATIVES AND REPUBLICAN PRIMARY VOTERS SUPPORT PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

- **Conservative voters** and **Republican primary voters** are largely of the view that paid family leave benefits should be available. Some 58% of conservatives and 53% of GOP primary voters believe some form of benefits ought to be available. And among these voters, the opposition is relatively

weak; fewer than one in seven say they strongly disagree that benefits should be available.

FURTHERMORE, EVEN LARGER MAJORITIES SAY IT IS IMPORTANT TO GIVE PEOPLE THE ABILITY TO STAY HOME IF THEY FEEL SICK OR TO CARE FOR A SICK LOVED ONE.

- By broadening the way paid family leave is defined, voters of all kinds can see clearly how they might benefit from greater availability of leave - and sizable majorities of key voter groups for Republicans ranging from **undecided voters** (76%) to **Republican primary voters** (65%) all believe such leave is important.

AND AMERICANS WANT A BIPARTISAN SOLUTION.

- A plurality of respondents - 48% - prefer a bipartisan paid leave plan over one that is just pushed by the majority in Congress (22%) or none at all (14%). **Hispanic voters** (52%), **seniors** (51%), and even **conservatives** (50%) are among the most interested in a bipartisan approach.

FINALLY, IN KEY SWING STATES, PAID LEAVE POLLS STRONGLY ACROSS THE CONSERVATIVE BASE AND WITH SWING VOTERS.

- In a survey conducted in NC by Public Opinion Strategies, August 31-September 8, 2022, voters support paid parental leave for 4 weeks to care for a new child following birth or adoption overwhelmingly: **women (81%), Independents (77%), Republicans (74%), and Trump voters (72%)**.
- In a survey conducted in the more conservative states of AL, NC, MO, OH, OK, and PA by the American Principles Project from September 17-20, 2022, **63% of Republicans** and **62% of self-identified “very conservative” voters** supported paid family leave.



LEGISLATOR HANDOUT

Examples of how to communicate support for Paid Family Leave

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS PRO-FAMILY

- Strong families are the key to strong communities. Societies can not flourish if the family is not healthy
- There is much evidence that shows that the first few months of a child's life are determinative of that child's psychological, emotional and economic success and therefore early bonding with parents is critical.
- It is clear that families and society benefit when mothers and fathers have time to develop strong bonds at the beginning of a child's life.
- A federal PFL policy would ensure that all families have time together after the birth or adoption of a new child, giving every family the best opportunity to start off strong.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS PRO-WOMEN

- Currently, only 19% of Americans have access to PFL¹ and a quarter of all mothers go back to work within 10-14 days after having a child²
- Women with at least 12 weeks of paid leave reported fewer depressive symptoms and better mental and physical health³
- Studies show that mothers who have PFL are 39% less likely to receive public assistance and 40% less likely to use food stamps⁴
- PFL keeps mothers connected to the workforce and ready to return when the leave is over, increasing positive outcomes for both mother and child.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS PRO-BUSINESS

- Today there are several proposals in Congress that do not impose any new mandates or any new entitlements on businesses, but rather flexibility around already existing programs.
- PFL can be done in a fiscally responsible way that helps new parents, families and businesses all at the same time.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS PRO-LIFE

- Studies show that most women seeking abortions cite the cost of having a child as a determining factor⁵
- A PFL policy that promotes life by supporting a mother to stay home and care for her newborn.

Sources:

- 1 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- 2 Department of Labor
- 3 Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics
- 4 Rutgers University
- 5 Guttmacher Institute



PAID LEAVE IN THE NEWS

National

- [Infant Brain Study Helps Make Case for Universal US Paid Leave Policy](#) - Jade McClain
- [What We Know About Paternity Leave](#) - Kay Hymowitz
- [Working Moms Will Not Wait Forever for Solutions](#) - Adrienne Schweer
- [Biden's Family Agenda, One Year In](#) - Abby M. McCloskey
- [Why Paid Leave is a Human Issue, Not a Political One](#) - Indra Nooyi
- [Christians Shouldn't Need a Mandate to Provide Paid Family Leave](#) - Bonnie Kristian
- [Without Roe, the GOP Must take Responsibility to Care for More Babies](#) - Abby McCloskey
- [Morning Consult Poll: The Value of Paid Family Leave](#) - Bipartisan Policy Center
- [National Paid Leave Could Change the American Caregiving Experience](#) - Nancy Leamond and Molly Day
- [Works and Families are Fighting for Paid Time to Care](#) - Carol Joyner
- [Our Policies are Failing Working Mothers](#) - Kelly Nicole
- [Births are Back: Did Government Stimulus Fuel a Baby Boomlet?](#) - Lyman Stone
- [A New Mom Had to Return to Work 12 Days after giving Birth- Then Strangers Showed Up in a Powerful Way](#) - Anne Marie Williams
- [Welcome Home: A Woman Choice to Prioritize Caregiving Over Career](#) - J. Taylor Calderone
- [American Families Need Paid Leave](#) - Kelly Rosati

State

- Florida: [The Value of Family Leave - A Dad's Voice](#) - Santiago Avila
- Ohio: [Opinion: paid leave critical if Roe overturned](#) – Laura Strietman
- Iowa: [Family Leave is a Bipartisan Solution](#) - Bob Vander Plaats
- Iowa: [Let's Make Paid Family Leave Possible](#) - Bob Vander Plaats
- Utah: [Perspective: What family policy should look like in Post-Roe America](#) - Brad Wilcox
- West Virginia: [Paid Family Leave is An Economic issue not a partisan one](#) - Beth Bloch
- Pennsylvania: [Jeff Coleman: A conservative's case for paid family leave](#) - Jeff Coleman
- Idaho: [Crapo Should Support Paid Family Leave](#) - Cat Jones
- Idaho: [Support paid family leave legislation](#) - Gretchen Manning
- Idaho: [Idaho delegation should support family leave legislation](#) - Gretchen Manning
- Florida: [Parental leave for adoption parents is important for families, businesses](#) - Kurt Kelly
- Indiana: [Paid family leave makes sense. Funding solutions must make sense, too](#) - Rob Panos
- Maine: [Conservatives need to step up present a paid leave plan of their own](#) - Abby McCloskey



Learn more at
www.PaidLeaveForFamilies.com