



# Congressional Members Guide on Paid Leave

*Welcome to the conservative Paid Leave guide our coalition has put together for your resourcing and reference!*

*Within this Guide you will find helpful statistics, messaging tips, key quotes and endorsements.*

*The [paidleaveforfamilies.com](https://paidleaveforfamilies.com) website is regularly updated with the most recent news coverage and additional resources to advocate for paid leave. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Anna Fronzaglia at [anna@claphamgroup.com](mailto:anna@claphamgroup.com)*





# Effective Messaging/ Talking Points

*As inflation skyrockets at 20%<sup>1</sup> and with an almost 25% increase in the price of food since 2021<sup>2</sup>, families are struggling to make ends meet. Since nearly 40% of Americans are unable to afford an unexpected \$400 expense, a new baby could be a financial catastrophe.*

*What 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?*

## **AS THE FACTS SHOW, THERE IS A SERIOUS NEED FOR PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN AMERICA:**

- According to one estimate, a shocking 23% of all mothers go back to work within two weeks of giving birth.
- Only 23% of workers (9% of low-wage workers) have access to paid family leave after the birth or adoption of a child.
- 64% of households with children have both parents working and 40% of babies are born to unwed mothers.

## **PAID FAMILY LEAVE MEETS OUR NEED FOR FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:**

- Paid family leave is proven to reduce reliance on public assistance such as food stamps and keeps new parents connected to the workplace.

## **THE BABY BENEFITS IN SO MANY WAYS:**

- Parents with access to paid leave are able to spend more time bonding with their children, resulting in a wide range of benefits to infants.
- Infants with increased activity of higher-frequency brain waves were 7.39 times more likely to have mothers with paid leave.
- Studies show that early bonding is crucial for the long-term mental health and resilience of children.
- 10 weeks of paid maternal leave was associated with a 10% lower infant mortality rate.

## **MOTHERS AND FATHERS BENEFIT AS WELL:**

- Women with at least 12 weeks of paid leave reported fewer depressive symptoms and better mental and physical health.
- Fathers also produce the love hormone “oxytocin” when with their baby those first few weeks, leading to them being more involved in childrearing later.

In this post Dobbs environment, supporting families after the birth or adoption of a child is smart pro-family economic policy.

1 <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/11/economy/biden-inflation-plan/index.html>

2 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2024/02/02/grocery-price-inflation-biden>



# Paid Leave Polls Very Well

*Polling shows that family and medical leave policy is a winner with key voting demographics. In a national survey conducted in December, 2022 by the Tarrance and Lake polling groups, 80% of all voters favored providing workers with access to paid family leave. This includes 62% of Republicans, 68% of conservative women and 70% of 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.*

## **PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE A HIT WITH TARGET VOTERS**

In a recent survey in October, 2023 of 1,000 voters by the Winston Group, overall 64% favored a national paid family and medical leave plan and only 19% opposed. Of this group 50% of Republicans supported a national paid family and medical leave plan, and only 29% opposed. There were a number of key swing voters identified in the survey for whom paid family and medical leave is a winning issue, including:

- 63% of all Young Republicans (aged 18-44) [n81]
- 54% of Republican Women [n92]
- 72% of Young Independents (aged 18-44) [n72]
- 65% of Independent Women [n84]
- 74% of Suburban Moms & Dads [n103]
- 77% of Rural Parents [n40]
- 78% of Hispanic Women [n60] (and 71% of Hispanic Men [n45])
- 65% of voters from Presidential swing states Obama and Trump won [n271]

When voters were asked whether a candidate's support for paid family leave would affect their vote; 47% said it would make them more likely, with 19% saying "a lot more likely." Overall only 18% said it would make them less likely, with the rest, 27%, saying it would not make a difference.

Of those under 45, 49% of Republicans [n64] and 63% of Independents [n75] said it would make them more likely to vote for a candidate that supports paid family leave and among suburban women [n43] only 16% said it would make them "less likely."



# Institutional and Influencer Support

## CONSERVATIVE, PRO-FAMILY AND PRO-LIFE SUPPORTERS OF PAID LEAVE

- Students for Life
- National Hispanic Pastors Alliance
- American Principles Project
- Faith and Freedom Coalition
- Niskanen Center
- McCloskey Policy LLC
- National Review Institute
- National Association of Evangelicals
- Patriot Voices
- Douglass Leadership Institute
- The Messy Family Project
- National Hispanic Leadership Conference

## QUOTES

*“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

*“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

*“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

*“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-FL): USA Today

*“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.”*

— Kristan Hawkins, President of Students for Life



# Highlights shared with Congress

## KEY POINTS REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF PAID LEAVE HIGHLIGHTED TO CONGRESS BY CONSERVATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

If all families could welcome a newborn or adopted child by spending the first few months together, imagine the impact that could have on families in America. Where there are strong families, we need less government

— Patriot Voices - Senator Rick Santorum

As a nation, we decided long ago that all American children irrespective of their circumstances deserved to be educated. We decided that the aged and frail deserve economic and healthcare support. We decided that there should be programs in place for our impoverished citizens. It is time for America to protect its most vulnerable population of all: infants. Paid parental leave upon the birth of a child should be integral to our social contract, embodied in a sustainable and comprehensive system of benefits, instead of a stand-alone benefit or perk.

— Abby McCloskey, policy director in two presidential campaigns

A society can be fairly judged on how family-friendly it is, including how easy we make it to have a child. A focused [paid leave] proposal, geared at giving new parents some insulation from the demands of the market economy at a time when baby is hardly sleeping through the night, mom is still physically recovering, dad may be caring for them both, and the family's income has become more variable, can attract support across the aisle.

— Patrick Brown

No matter one's income, every mother and father deserve and should spend the most crucial time of their child's beginning stages of life at home with their families ... As American communities weather significant shifts - from a decline in birth rates to an emergence of society-transforming technologies to increasing loneliness and other mental health challenges - it is clear that families are an essential source of social stability and health. The foundational work of families grounds the health of children, the labor force, and civil society...For this reason, we encourage members of Congress to work toward establishing a national paid family leave policy.

— Center for Public Justice

With 71% of registered voters supporting paid leave for parents, this issue should be common ground for both conservatives and liberals.

— Students for Life

Approximately 66 percent of voters stated that they “would face serious financial hardship” if they had to take unpaid leave for family reasons.<sup>1</sup> This statistic is even more concerning when broken down by gender: 48 percent of women state that they would be “very likely” to face serious financial hardship if they had to take unpaid leave (compared to 35 percent of men).<sup>2</sup>

— Americans United for Life

Most parents report wishing that they could spend more time after birth with their child than they are able to.<sup>3</sup> ... The evidence is overwhelming of the benefits generated for children and parents from being together in early weeks and months of life. However, this time together is often difficult for working parents to take or secure. Self-financing an extended time out of the labor force is costly. Employer-sponsored paid family leave is relatively uncommon across the income spectrum, and nearly non-existent for low-to-moderate income parents. Child care providers often do not take infants under six weeks old.

— Convergence Collaborative

By softening the tradeoff between career and having children, paid leave could also lead to more would-be parents feeling freer to take time away from the office knowing they will have more financial and professional support to become a parent.

— Patrick Brown

Because paid leave is focused on a month or two after birth, this would not create the same concerns around dependency and work disincentives as other forms of social spending.

— Institute for Family Studies

The time after birth is a crucial and unique time of bonding, healing, and child development. It is also a time of income volatility and job insecurity. These competing concerns make it a uniquely valuable time for providing paid leave.

— Convergence Collaborative

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1 National Partnership for Women & Families. (2018). “Voters’ Views on Paid Family + Medical Leave”. <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/voters-views-on-paid-family-medical-leave-survey-findings-august-2018.pdf>

2 *ibid.*

3 Schulte, B., Durana, A., Stout, B., Moyer, J. (2017). “Paid Family Leave: How Much Time is Enough?” <https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/reports/paid-family-leave-how-much-time-enough/introduction>



Learn more at  
[www.PaidLeaveForFamilies.com](http://www.PaidLeaveForFamilies.com)