



*Washington Work  
and Family Coalition*

## Quick Facts about Paid Family and Medical Leave

A new baby, cancer diagnosis, or dying parent – occasionally we all need to take extended time away from work to care for family or health. California, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island have programs to provide all workers with paid leave when a new child arrives in the family or a serious health condition strikes. Washington needs Paid Family and Medical Leave!

### **Women, babies, and elders pay a high price for the status quo:**

- For most U.S. workers, access to paid leave depends on employer policies. Even with the growing number of city and state paid sick days laws,<sup>1</sup> 39% of private sector workers get no paid sick leave and just 12% receive paid family leave. Among the lowest wage workers – disproportionately women of all races and men of color – 78% lack sick leave and 97% lack paid family leave.<sup>2</sup>
- Federal policy provides only 12 weeks of **unpaid** leave for a new baby or the serious health condition of a worker or family member. 41% aren't even covered because their employer has fewer than 50 employees, or they haven't worked a full year or enough hours for their employer.<sup>3</sup>
- Public health experts have found strong links between expanding paid maternity leave and decreasing infant deaths.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. is the only developed economy without universal paid maternity leave – and ranked 30<sup>th</sup> in infant deaths in 2013.<sup>5</sup> If Washington had the same infant death rate as British Columbia, 2 fewer infants would die each week in our state, a 23% reduction.<sup>6</sup>
- Now, new parents cobble together time to nurture their precious newborn from saved up vacation and sick leave – if they have it – and whatever unpaid leave they can afford.<sup>7</sup> Despite the high cost of infant childcare and pediatricians' recommendations to breastfeed exclusively for six months, 1 in 4 U.S. women go back to work within 2 weeks of childbirth.<sup>8</sup>
- 18% of Washington voters over age 45 provide unpaid care for an adult loved one, and 39% have in the past. The majority of care givers are women, and 60% report feeling stressed trying to balance work and family, according to a 2016 AARP poll.<sup>9</sup> These numbers will increase as our population ages.

### **Paid family and medical leave programs improve health and reduce inequality:**

- Longer parental leaves improve child and maternal health and increase parental involvement.<sup>10</sup> In the states with paid family and medical leave, new moms are twice as likely to take paid leave as in other states. Paid leave triples for low-income women. Maternity leaves average 22 days longer in these states, new moms and babies are healthier, and fathers take more leave, too.<sup>11</sup>
- Women with paid family leave are more likely to be employed one year post-birth<sup>12</sup> and report 9% higher wages than women without leave, controlling for demographics and job characteristics.<sup>13</sup> Use of public assistance by both new mothers and fathers drops when they have paid leave.<sup>14</sup>
- Children, elders, and people of all ages recover faster from serious health conditions and have fewer complications and re-hospitalizations when loved ones are present, receive doctor's instructions, and can assist with follow up care.<sup>15</sup>

**Let's use our voice and our power to fight for a statewide  
paid family and medical leave program in Washington!**

Visit [www.waworkandfamily.org](http://www.waworkandfamily.org) to learn more.

## Sources:

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- <sup>1</sup> As of September 14, 2016, 38 jurisdictions have passed paid sick leave laws, including Seattle, SeaTac, Tacoma, and Spokane. See Family Values @ Work Timeline of Wins, <http://familyvaluesatwork.org/media-center/paid-sick-days-wins>.
- <sup>2</sup> US Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey, March 2015, Table 32. Leave benefits: Access, private industry workers, <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2015/ownership/private/table32a.pdf>.
- <sup>3</sup> The Family and Medical Leave Act requires 1,250 hours work in the previous year and a full year with a covered employer to qualify for job-protected leave. 41% estimate from: Gault et al, Paid Parental Leave in the United States: What the Data Tell Us about Access, Usage, and Economic and Health Benefits, Institute for Women's Policy Research, Jan 2014, <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/paid-parental-leave-in-the-united-states-what-the-data-tell-us-about-access-usage-and-economic-and-health-benefits/>.
- <sup>4</sup> Washington State Board of Health, Health Impact Review of SB 5459, Aug 2015, [http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2015-10-SB5459\\_092815.pdf](http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2015-10-SB5459_092815.pdf); Burtle, A. and Bezruchka, S., Population Health and Paid Parental Leave: What the United States Can Learn from Two Decades of Research. Healthcare 2016, <http://www.mdpi.com/2227-9032/4/2/30>.
- <sup>5</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, Infant Mortality Rates, 2013, webpage viewed Sept. 14, 2016, <https://data.oecd.org/healthstat/infant-mortality-rates.htm>.
- <sup>6</sup> EOI calculation from statistics located:  
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/VitalStatisticsData/Birth/BirthTablesbyTopic>;  
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/VitalStatisticsData/InfantDeath/InfantDeathTablesbyTopic>;  
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/health21a-eng.htm>.
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Maternity Leave and Employment Patterns of First-Time Mothers: 1961–2008," Oct 2011, <https://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p70-128.pdf>.
- <sup>8</sup> In These Times, "The Real War on Families, Aug 18, 2015, <http://inthesetimes.com/article/18151/the-real-war-on-families>.
- <sup>8</sup> EOI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey data, 2014.
- <sup>9</sup> 2016 AARP Washington Caregiving Survey: The Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act: [http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys\\_statistics/lrc/2016/2016-caregiving-wa-45plus-care-act-rc-lrc.pdf](http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/lrc/2016/2016-caregiving-wa-45plus-care-act-rc-lrc.pdf).
- <sup>10</sup> Washington State Board of Health, Health Impact Review of SB 5459, Aug 2015, [http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2015-10-SB5459\\_092815.pdf](http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2015-10-SB5459_092815.pdf).
- <sup>11</sup> Linda Houser and Thomas P. Vartanian, "Policy Matters: Public Policy, Paid Leave for New Parents, and Economic Security for U.S. Workers," April 2012, Center for Women and Work, Rutgers, [http://cww.rutgers.edu/sites/cww.rutgers.edu/files/documents/working\\_families/Policy\\_Matters\\_Final\\_4.29.pdf](http://cww.rutgers.edu/sites/cww.rutgers.edu/files/documents/working_families/Policy_Matters_Final_4.29.pdf); Maya Rossin-Slater, Christopher J. Ruhm, Jane Waldfogel, "The Effects of California's Paid Family Leave Program on Mothers' Leave-Taking and Subsequent Labor Market Outcomes," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 17715, December 2011, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17715>.
- <sup>12</sup> Maya Rossin-Slater, Christopher J. Ruhm, Jane Waldfogel, "The Effects of California's Paid Family Leave Program on Mothers' Leave-Taking and Subsequent Labor Market Outcomes," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 17715, December 2011, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17715>.
- <sup>13</sup> Heather Boushey, "Family friendly policies: Helping mothers make ends meet," 2008, Review of Social Economy, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/29770449>.
- <sup>14</sup> Linda Houser and Thomas P. Vartanian, "Policy Matters: Public Policy, Paid Leave for New Parents, and Economic Security for U.S. Workers," April 2012, Center for Women and Work, Rutgers, [http://cww.rutgers.edu/sites/cww.rutgers.edu/files/documents/working\\_families/Policy\\_Matters\\_Final\\_4.29.pdf](http://cww.rutgers.edu/sites/cww.rutgers.edu/files/documents/working_families/Policy_Matters_Final_4.29.pdf);
- <sup>15</sup> Washington State Board of Health, Health Impact Review of SB 5459, Aug 2015, [http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2015-10-SB5459\\_092815.pdf](http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2015-10-SB5459_092815.pdf).