

House Passes Federal Employees Leave Act

Posted By [James Parks](#) On June 19, 2008 @ 5:11 pm In [Legislation & Politics](#) | [No Comments](#)

Congress took an important first step today toward ensuring paid [1] [family leave](#) for federal workers. On a 278–146 vote, the House passed the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act (H.R. 5781), which would give federal workers up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for a newborn or a newly adopted child.

If enacted, the bill would guarantee four weeks of paid parental leave for the birth or adoption of a new child; federal workers also would be able to use up to eight weeks of accrued paid sick time immediately following the first four weeks of parental leave. The bill, introduced in the House by Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.), now goes to the Senate, where it is being sponsored by Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.).

In a statement, [2] [AFGE](#) President John Gage says the “time has come for the federal government to set the standard for U.S. employers on paid parental leave.”

The benefits to children and families of four weeks of paid parental leave are enormous and long-lasting. This sets an example for private-sector employers.

The women’s group [3] [MomsRising.org](#) mounted a major effort in support of the bill. Members sent nearly 17,000 e-mails to their representatives. Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, executive director of MomsRising.org, says:

Everyone needs paid family and medical leave, and it’s past time to start putting this policy in place. We know that paid family leave helps provide children with a healthy start and keep families out of poverty, yet the United States lags behind every developed country in the world in offering paid leave to new mothers.

It’s time for the federal government to become a model employer by offering their workforce paid parental leave, and to pave the way for the rest of the nation to follow. The House of Representatives has taken the first step and we now urge the U.S. Senate to follow suit.

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[1] family leave: <http://www.aflcio.org/issues/workfamily/fmla.cfm>

[2] AFGE: <http://www.afge.org/>

[3] MomsRising.org:

<http://blog.aflcio.org/2008/06/17/magnificently-overqualified-mothers-to-mccain-women-deserve-equal-pay>