

# A national paid parental leave policy for the United States <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Policy Proposal PDF <sup>[2]</sup>

## ABSTRACT

Prior research indicates that entitlements to paid parental leave following the birth of a child provide substantial labor market and health benefits. Despite widespread public support for paid leave, the United States is almost alone in being without a national paid leave policy, although a number of states have adopted such programs. A national paid leave program is proposed here that is designed to promote gender equity through entitlements to 12 weeks of paid time off work for both mothers and fathers. It is modest in comparison to other countries' programs in both duration and generosity; this is in recognition of the uncertainty involved in applying international experiences to the United States. Additional program elements include: job protection during the leave and broad eligibility to parents with minimal employment histories; a wage replacement rate of 75 percent for low earners and 50 percent at higher earnings, up to a maximum; financing through a stable stream of general revenues; administration through a new office established within the Social Security Administration; and careful evaluation of the program three to five years after initial implementation.

**Region:** United States <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** maternity and parental leave <sup>[4]</sup>

paternity leave <sup>[5]</sup>

gender <sup>[6]</sup>

equity <sup>[7]</sup>

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