

White House holds summit on child care and paid leave ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Washington (CNN)The White House held a summit on child care and paid leave on Thursday, an issue first daughter and senior presidential adviser Ivanka Trump has carried the torch on since President Donald Trump took office.

"We have come together today because we have a historic chance to pass paid family leave and childcare reform so that every American family has the freedom to embrace the dignity of work and the joy of raising a family," Ivanka Trump said during her opening remarks. "Our vision is to give each parent the resources and support they need to make the best choice for their families."

The White House event comes a day after the House of Representatives passed an annual defense authorization bill which includes a provision providing all federal workers with 12 weeks of paid parental leave for the first time in US history.

While a provision for federal workers is a step forward, a bipartisan deal on paid family leave for all Americans could still be a heavy lift in Congress, with Democrats and Republicans still split on how to pay for it and how broad a national paid leave policy should be.

Paid family leave is something Ivanka Trump has been working on with members of Congress and private sector leaders behind the scenes during her two years at the White House. It's part of her larger portfolio related to women's economic empowerment.

The White House summit includes panels with advocates, lawmakers, private sector CEOs and senior administration officials regarding the issues of childcare and paid family leave. The President also delivered remarks at the end of the summit.

Strong American families, Trump said during his speech, "make brighter futures for every American citizen."

"With more women working today than ever before, we now have a historic opportunity to enact long overdue reforms. It's time to pass paid family leave and expand access to quality (care)," Trump said.

He did not bring up ongoing impeachment proceedings during his remarks.

As part of the event, the White House said it is releasing a report from the Council of Economic Advisers on the affordability of childcare and releasing the administration's eight reform principles.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar outlined the eight reform principles for the administration on Wednesday.

Azar said the principles include reauthorizing and reforming the Childcare and Development Block Grant Act, building "the supply of childcare and increase choices for families," ensuring "commonsense-aligned regulations," addressing "the childcare workforce shortage by looking at both educational requirements and compensation," modernizing in the childcare business model and creating "a rational financing framework for childcare in America."

Ivanka Trump said Thursday that the reform principles are focused on getting childcare choices back to parents.

"At the heart of our reforms is democratizing choice and control and giving it back to parents -- where it belongs," she said.

A senior administration official said the administration would not be announcing support for specific legislative proposals during the summit.

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