

WASHINGTON, DC - Legislation that would provide federal employees with four weeks of paid parental leave after the birth or adoption of a child overwhelmingly passed the U.S. House of Representatives today with a vote of 278-146. "The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act" (H.R. 5781) was introduced by Representatives Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD), Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY) and Tom Davis (R-VA) last year. House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia Chairman Danny Davis (D-IL) helped move the bill to the floor. Senators Jim Webb (D-VA) and John Warner (R-VA) introduced companion legislation in the Senate on Monday.

"All too often, people who take leave from their jobs to care for a new child or ailing parents have to make significant financial sacrifices because current law does not ensure leave with pay," stated Congressman Hoyer, who has 55,000 federal employees living in his Congressional District. "By providing four weeks of paid leave to federal employees for the birth or adoption of a child, this legislation recognizes that financial security is a critical ingredient in ensuring that parental leave succeeds and families thrive. This policy - which is commonplace in the private-sector - is not only pro-family, it is pro-government, and will strengthen the federal government's ability to compete for high-quality employees."

"The federal government may refer to its leave policies as 'family-friendly,' but the reality is that it's forcing many of its employees to choose between their paycheck and their new child," said Rep. Maloney. "As the nation's largest employer, the federal government should be setting a national standard with workplace policies that are truly family-friendly. If President Bush supports family values, he will reevaluate his misguided veto threat of this important legislation."

"Those of us in the Washington area know all too well how difficult it is for the federal government to compete with private-sector employers for top-notch professional talent," said Rep. Tom Davis, whose district includes the Virginia suburbs of the nation's capital. "This measure, which I've pushed for years, says to employees, 'We care about you and your family. We want you to stay with us.' But it's more than a recruitment and retention tool. It's a matter of fairness."

With over 1.8 million employees, the federal government is the nation's largest employer. Federal employees currently receive no paid time off specifically to care for an infant or newly adopted child. If they have a child and want paid time off, they have to cobble together their accrued sick days and vacation time.

By failing to provide paid parental leave, the federal government lags behind both the private sector (53 percent of private-sector employers provide some form of paid parental leave), and other industrialized nations; the U.S. is the only industrialized country that does not provide support for all workers with a new child.

“Today we are taking an important and long overdue step towards strengthening the federal government’s parental leave policy,” said [Rep. Waxman](#). “The passage of this legislation is good news for federal employees and their families.”

“Our children are indeed the future and we need to do all that we can to show that the federal government is willing to practice what it preaches. Providing four weeks of parental leave after the birth or adoption of a child demonstrates that we are willing to practice what we preach and lead the way for the nation to follow,” said [Rep. Danny Davis](#).

“This legislation fills a significant gap in our employee benefits portfolio,” said [Dan Beard](#), the Chief Administrative Officer of the House. “As the officer who would be charged with implementing this legislation, I can assure we will have no problems implementing the legislation as written and I hope it will be enacted by the Congress and signed into law as soon as practicable.”

In addition to giving all federal employees four weeks of paid leave, H.R. 5781 would allow them to use any accumulated annual or sick leave to offset the 12 weeks of unpaid leave guaranteed by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

All employees of the federal government who are eligible for 12 weeks of unpaid leave under FMLA would be covered by “The Federal Employee Paid Parental Leave Act.” Generally, this applies to federal employees who have been with their current employer for at least a year, and have logged at least 1,250 hours in the past year.

Background:

In addition to Representatives Maloney, Hoyer, Tom Davis, and Danny Davis, other co-sponsors of the "Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act" include Representatives: Howard Berman (D-CA), Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Keith Ellison (D-MN),

Chaka Fattah (D-PA), Bob Filner (D-CA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Al Green (D-TX), Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), John Lewis (D-GA), Betty McCollum (D-MN), George Miller (D-CA), Jim Moran (D-VA), John Sarbanes (D-MD), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Jose Serrano (D-NY), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), and Lynn Woolsey (D-CA).

Organizations that support the bill include: the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Federally Employed Women, Moms Rising, the National Partnership for Women and Families, and the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU).

[Click here for additional information on "The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act," including a comprehensive background memo on the legislation](#)

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