

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, on the 15th Anniversary of the enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), U.S. Representatives Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY), Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD), and Danny Davis (D-IL) released the following statement:

“It was 15 years ago that President Clinton signed into law one of the most significant worker rights bills of the late 20th Century - the Family and Medical Leave Act. Before the law was enacted, employees had no safeguards against discrimination or termination in the event of an extended interruption in work due to legitimate personal reasons, such as a serious medical condition or the birth of a child.

“Under the FMLA, an employee is allowed to take job-protected unpaid leave due to illness or to care for a new baby or sick loved one. This transformative legislation ensured - for the very first time - that employees would be protected from workplace penalties on account of extended illness or family issues.

“The 15th Anniversary of this landmark legislation is cause to remember how far we have come to ensure family-friendly policies in the workplace, but it also serves to remind us that our work is not yet finished – particularly in the federal government workplace, where policies on paid family leave lag behind many large private sector employers.

“Legislation we have introduced – the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act – would make the federal government a model for private sector employers by allowing federal employees to take eight weeks of paid parental leave to care for a new child.

“Employees have a difficult time as it is balancing work and family obligations, let alone worrying about the impact of income lost during what should otherwise be a joyful time for new parents. Our bill would alleviate that pressure by making it feasible to take an extended leave to welcome a new child into the world.

“Furthermore, at a time when the U.S. government must compete with private firms for skilled workers, the lack of a paid parental leave policy weakens our hand in attracting and retaining the best and the brightest to federal service. Rather than feeding the talent-drain with antiquated

family leave policies, the federal government should be leading the way by providing every employee with a truly family-friendly workplace.

“Looking back on how far we have come to extend workplace protections and benefits to U.S. citizens through the FMLA and other landmark laws, we can be proud of the progress we have made. With the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act, we have the opportunity to continue down that path to help more families achieve a healthy work-life balance and, at the same time, increase the marketability of the federal government as a pro-family, pro-child employer.”

In addition to giving all federal employees eight weeks of paid leave the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act (H.R. 3799) 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).

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