

PAID LEAVE for ALL ACTION



February 9, 2021

Dear Senator Leahy,

We, the undersigned members of the Vermont FaMLI Coalition, represent thousands of Vermont's workers, parents, caregivers, small business owners, and advocates for gender and reproductive equity, families, food security, racial justice, disability rights, and more.

We thank you for your continued support for Paid Leave and for signing on to the FAMILY Act. Our coalition is here to support you and your staff however we can, to ensure strong paid leave protections are included in the forthcoming Budget Reconciliation to serve the critical and immediate need through COVID-19 and deliver on a permanent solution for workers and families desperately in need of financial security. Vermont has broad support for a paid family and medical leave program and with growing national support, we hope you will champion this issue and help us achieve a solution that serves not only Vermonters, but the nation.

As you know, emergency paid sick and child care leave was one of the first pandemic response initiatives Congress passed in a bipartisan vote last March in recognition of how important paid leave is to beating this public health crisis. That temporary program helped prevent over 400 cases per day and provided much needed support to our small businesses who were doing everything they could to keep their workers safe and financially solvent.

As we begin to see a light at the end of the COVID-19 "tunnel", paid leave is an important complement to vaccine dissemination and quarantine protocols. With women making up 74% of Vermont's unemployed, a paid leave program will also help address the staggering impacts this pandemic has had on women in the workforce. Paid leave also addresses racial disparities only deepened in this pandemic. It affords protections to all families, and particularly essential workers who have risked their lives every day. Paid leave is what is required to meet the unprecedented scale of this crisis.

We were thrilled to see that the Biden-Harris American Rescue Plan, unveiled last month, included the reinstatement and strengthening of emergency paid leave as a critical part of

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pandemic relief. This would save lives by preventing the spread of the virus, conserve health care resources, and save the jobs of workers and families across America. We also know that a permanent paid leave solution will provide a safety net that ensures that no worker has to put their fear of losing pay before their own health or the health and safety of their family.

Again, we thank you for your continued support and prioritization for both emergency and permanent paid leave and appreciate all that you do for Vermonters and for our country.

Sincerely,

ACLU
Hunger Free Vermont
Let's Grow Kids
Main Street Alliance of Vermont
Planned Parenthood of Northern New England
Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility
Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
Vermont Foodbank
Vermont Interfaith Action
Vermont Network Against Sexual and Domestic Violence
Vermont Parent Child Center Network
Vermont Works for Women
Voices for Vermont's Children