



PAID PARENTAL LEAVE FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

U.S. federal government employees do not receive a single day of paid parental leave after the birth or adoption of a child and must use available vacation or sick leave. As the largest employer in the country, the federal government should provide paid parental leave to retain good employees, compete for top talent and improve employee morale. To do so, Congress should pass either the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2017, H.R. 1022/S. 362, or the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2018, H.R. 6275, in the 115th Congress.

What is the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act?

Under H.R.1022 and S.362, federal workers would receive six weeks of paid leave for the birth, foster placement or adoption of a child. Meanwhile, H.R. 6275 would provide federal employees with 12 weeks of paid leave in connection with the birth, foster placement or adoption of a child. The United States is the only industrialized country that does not offer its civil service employees any paid time off after the birth or adoption of a child.

Who is eligible for paid parental leave?

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to most government and private-sector workers for the birth or adoption of a child, or to care for seriously ill family members. Federal employees can use up to three months of unpaid leave under FMLA for the birth or adoption of a child. Employees who currently are eligible for unpaid leave under FMLA would be eligible for six weeks of paid parental leave under H.R. 1022/S. 362, and the full 12 weeks under H.R. 6275.

What is the cost of paid parental leave for federal employees?

The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2017 is not expected to increase deficits, according to [previous estimates](#) by the Congressional Budget Office.

According to an analysis by the [Institute for Women's Policy Research](#), the federal government could prevent 2,650 departures per year among female employees and avoid \$50 million per year in turnover costs by offering paid parental leave.

What is the status of paid parental leave for federal employees?

Under current law, neither federal agencies nor the President has the authority to provide paid parental leave to federal employees. On January 15, 2015, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum that directs agencies to advance six weeks of sick leave to employees in connection with the birth or adoption of a child. However, employees utilizing that advance would lose future accruals of sick leave to pay back the advanced leave.

The bipartisan Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2017 was introduced in the House ([H.R. 1022](#)) by Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney, D-NY, and in the Senate ([S. 362](#)) by Sen. Brian Schatz, D-HI. The bipartisan Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2018 ([H.R. 6275](#)) was introduced by Rep. Barbara Comstock, R-VA. All three bills are still pending in committee.

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Why should federal employees be granted paid parental leave?

Providing paid parental leave is good personnel policy. First, it improves recruitment and retention of a well-qualified federal workforce. Additionally, it would likely boost employee morale, which has been shown to increase productivity. It also is a reflection of the value that is placed on family and parenting.

Many private-sector employers recognize the value of the paid parental leave policy. So does every single other developed country in the world; the United States is the only one that does not require or provide paid parental leave of some kind for new parents. In fact, we even lag behind the developing and undeveloped world, as only Papua New Guinea, Lesotho and Swaziland do not provide paid parental leave for new parents.

It is long past time for the federal government to offer this benefit, particularly as more private-sector companies are learning that by offering paid parental leave, they improve both employee morale and retention of good employees. This commonsense legislation should be acted on swiftly, but committee leadership has been reluctant to do so.