



PAID PARENTAL LEAVE FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

U.S. federal government employees do not receive a single week 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 the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act (FEPPLA), H.R. 532/S.2033 in the 114th Congress. Absent this legislation, at the very least, Congress should allow federal agencies to provide paid parental leave to their employees within their respective budgets.

What is the Federal Employee Paid Parental Leave Act?

Under the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act, federal workers would receive six weeks of paid leave for the birth, foster placement and 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 who give birth or adopt a child can use up to three months of unpaid leave under FMLA. Employees who currently are eligible for unpaid leave under FMLA, would be eligible for six weeks of paid parental leave under the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act.

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

The bipartisan Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2015, introduced in the House ([H.R. 532](#)) by Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-NY, and in the Senate ([S. 2033](#)) by Sens. Brian Schatz, D-HI, and Barbara Mikulski, D-MD, are not expected to increase deficits, according to [previous estimates](#) by the Congressional Budget Office.

According to analysis by the [Institute for Women's Policy Research](#), the federal government could prevent 2,650 departures per year among female employees and prevent \$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, the President 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 that advance.

President Obama proposed providing six weeks of paid parental leave for federal employees in his fiscal year 2017 budget. Both bills in the House and Senate are pending in committee. It is long past time for the federal government to offer this benefit, particularly as more and more private-sector companies are learning that in doing so, they improve both employee morale and retention of good employees. This commonsense piece of legislation should be acted on swiftly, but committee leadership appears reluctant to do so.



PAID PARENTAL LEAVE FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Are there any other efforts being taken to provide paid parental leave to federal employees?

Yes. Even as NARFE, and others support passage of the FEPPLA, we also support adding language to the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill to provide agencies the authority to provide paid parental leave within their budgets.

Both private-sector employers and members of Congress have the discretion to provide their employees with paid parental leave as they see fit. Under current law, neither federal agencies nor the President has this authority.

Of course, NARFE supports the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2015, which would provide a guaranteed benefit of six weeks of paid parental leave for the birth or adoption of a child. However, if Congress does not support providing this benefit as a guarantee, it should at least provide federal agencies the same discretion they themselves enjoy to provide this benefit to their employees within the confines of their budgetary constraints. Furthermore, in terms of cost, the Congressional Budget Office has estimated the bill is cost neutral, saying, “enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or receipts.” Likewise, appropriations language giving agencies discretion should be budget neutral as well.

Most importantly, 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 is also a reflection of the value the citizens of this country place on family and parenting.

Many private-sector employers recognize the value of the 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 to 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. At a minimum, Congress should provide federal agencies the discretion to provide it to their employees.

Draft appropriations language to achieve this policy is provided below:

“Notwithstanding any other provision of law, within the appropriations or funds available for payment of salaries and expenses for positions within an employing agency, the head of the agency may authorize leave with pay for up to six administrative workweeks in connection with the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child of an employee of the agency. Such leave shall not be considered annual or sick leave.”