Paid Leave is the Foundation of a Stronger Louisiana

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We can build a stronger Louisiana.

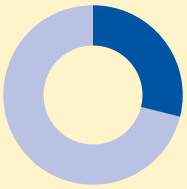
The health of Louisiana's people and its economy will be strengthened by widespread access to both paid sick days and paid family and medical leave. Providing all employees with access to at least eight days of paid sick days will reduce the number of employees who come to work sick, and has been shown to improve workers' productivity and morale, while also reducing turnover. Longer-term paid family and medical leave will ensure that parents can bond with their new babies, that mothers can physically recover from childbirth before returning to work, and that our fellow Louisianans can take care of their own medical needs (and their loved ones) without having to endure a major financial crisis. Working together, we can ensure that we all have the things we need to do well and reach our full potential as a community.

Strong leave policies should avoid the pitfalls of previous efforts by:

- Providing both short-term sick leave and long-term family and medical leave benefits;
- Covering all workers, regardless of the size of their employer or the employee's part-time status;
- Providing avenues for self-employed and "gig economy workers" to participate in paid family and medical leave;
- Replacing wages at adequate rates to ensure that all workers can take leave without imperiling their families' financial stability; and
- Sharing costs associated with leave benefits among both workers and employers.

Times have changed, making paid leave more important than ever.

Caring for one another is part of what defines us as humans. Yet far too many workers in Louisiana are forced to make the impossible choice between caring for a newborn child or ill family member, and providing for their family financially. Workplace policies in Louisiana have not changed to reflect the shifting realities of modern workers, who often struggle to balance work and caregiving responsibilities. A lack of sick or family and medical leave policies may have been more tolerable when many households had one parent who worked outside the home and one parent who was dedicated to full-time caregiving. However, this model is outdated--in 2018, 71% of Louisiana children (and 70% of children nationwide) lived in families where all available parents were in the labor force.[1] Updating policies to reflect our country's current realities will mean healthier, more productive employees and higher retention rates for employers. Short-term paid sick days and long-term paid family and medical leave are essential family-supporting policies, as they provide workers with financial security while giving the flexibility to protect their health, the greater public's health and ensuring that they are able to care for their family.



29%

of registered Louisiana voters have experienced financial hardship because they or a family member had to take unpaid leave to deal with family or medical issues.[2]

Other states have paved the way.

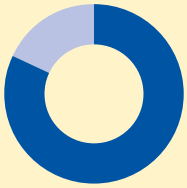
Our state can learn from the experiences of other states that have led the way in paid sick days and paid family and medical leave policies:

- In 2011, Connecticut became the first state to pass legislation requiring many employers to provide paid sick days to employees. Despite initial opposition from the business community, research conducted after it was implemented found that most employers reported modest or no costs as a result of the law. Three-quarters of surveyed employers support the earned paid sick leave law and very few reported any fraud or abuse.[3]
- California has offered paid family and medical leave since 2004. As a result of the program's age and the state's size, California's paid leave program has been the subject of over a decade of research. The data has shown that, for the average

firm, labor costs have not increased and retention has increased.[4] Paid leave increases the likelihood that women will return to the workforce after having a child. Women who took leave were 93% more likely to still be in the workforce 9-12 months after having a child than women who took no leave. There is also little evidence that workers take "too much" leave. The typical worker who took leave only took it once over the course of the decade.[5]

Louisiana's leaders need to act.

Louisiana's legislators should follow the lead of their peers in other states by passing both paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave legislation. Twelve states and Washington D.C. have enacted laws to require paid sick leave, and eight states have enacted laws to provide paid family leave. The following chart outlines how Louisiana can create strong sick leave and paid family and medical leave policies to build a stronger Louisiana.



82%

of registered voters in Louisiana support a national paid family medical and leave policy.[6]

Key Features of Strong Paid Sick Day Policies

- **Available Leave:** One hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked. This level would allow employees who become ill with highly contagious illnesses, such as COVID-19 and influenza, to recover fully prior to returning to work.
- **Eligible Employees:** All employees at public and private employers, including part-time workers.
- **Source of Funding:** Employers cover the cost of sick days, potentially with tax credits available to offset costs for small businesses.
- **Qualifying Reasons for Paid Sick Days:** Personal illness/injury and preventive care, care for family members, or domestic violence needs.
- **Rate of Compensation:** Employees are paid at their normal rate of compensation.
- **Additional Considerations:**
  For the purposes of the tax credit, "small businesses" would be defined as employers of 50 or fewer employees that are not part of a larger enterprise or owned by a business with 50 of more employees and does not derive income from passive investments.

Key Features of Strong Family and Medical Leave Policies

- **Available Leave:**
  - Recommended: up to 6 months (26 weeks) of paid leave for all new parents (including adoptive parents), and a minimum of 12 weeks
  - Up to 12 weeks for an employee's own serious illness or to care for a seriously ill family member
- **Eligible Employees:** All employees at public and private employers of all sizes, including self-employed individuals and members of the "gig economy."
- **Source of Funding:** Costs are shared between employees and employers through a payroll tax; self-employed individuals and members of the "gig economy" would pay both the employer and employee portion of the tax.
- **Rate of Compensation:** Employees earning less than $60,000 annually should be compensated at 100% of their normal pay to ensure that they can meet their family's basic needs. Employees with higher earnings would have their wages replaced at lower rates, with the highest earners receiving a maximum of 50% of their wages, capped at the state's average weekly wage. Note that these policies would not prohibit private employers from offering more generous leave packages, which can be a key strategy to attract and retain employees.

Paid sick leave benefits everyone.

- **Children:** When parents can take time off of work to take a child to a doctor's visit or care for a sick child, children will be more likely to receive routine preventative care and immunizations and may be less likely to go to school or child care sick, reducing the spread of illness.
- **Employees:** Employees will be able to take care of their basic medical needs and the medical needs of their loved ones, including preventative care.
- **Employers:** Employers will reduce contagion among their employees and customers, and will benefit from decreased turnover and increased productivity.
- **Louisiana:** As fewer employees go to work sick, we are likely to see public health improve, including decreased COVID-19 transmission at workplaces. Our health care system will see reduced costs because employees with access to paid sick leave are less likely to use emergency rooms and more likely to seek preventative care. Louisiana has some of the nation's highest rates of chronic illnesses, such as hypertension and diabetes. When employees can take time off of work to seek proactive treatment for these illnesses, they can improve their disease management and may be able to avoid the catastrophic consequences of unmanaged diabetes and heart disease, such as heart attacks and strokes.

Paid family and medical leave benefits everyone.

- **Children:** Infants will benefit from lower risk of death, improved bonding with parents, lower rates of maternal stress and increased rates of breastfeeding. Louisiana has one of the highest rates of infant mortality in the nation, and increasing access to paid leave can be an important step towards increasing the number of Louisiana babies who get to celebrate their first birthdays.
- **Employees:** Employees will be able to engage in some of the most elemental human activities-bonding with a newborn baby, healing after a major surgery or childbirth, caring for an ill parent as they fight cancer-without having to worry about whether that care or self-care will mean that they can't make rent or put food on the table.
- **Employers:** Employers will benefit from reduced turnover and improved staff morale. Higher retention rates can reduce business costs, including recruiting and training costs.
- **Louisiana:** Louisiana has long been at the "top of every bad list" and the "bottom of every good list." Enacting paid family and medical leave policies can make our state a national leader in enacting "family first" policies.

Paid leave is an essential building block for our economy.

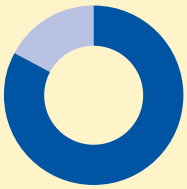
If we think about supporting the well-being of Louisiana's citizens as a house being built, we can see that factors like a strong economy fortify a solid foundation. That foundation will help to address issues like "brain drain," the frequent migration of college-educated residents to other states. According to a report by economist Gary Wagner at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, between 2000 and 2017, Louisiana lost almost 30,000 college educated residents to Texas, almost 10,000 to Florida, and over 2,000 to Arkansas. Keeping these highly skilled workers would give our economy a significant boost, and implementing guaranteed paid sick days and paid family and medical leave policies would make Louisiana the first and only state in the Deep South to extend these benefits to its workers. This could put Louisiana businesses in a regionally advantageous position to recruit and retain high-quality workers, further bolstering our state's economic prospects.

Expanding access to paid leave will make our economy stronger by increasing productivity and improving the health of our workforce. International research shows that paid leave helps more women remain in the labor force, boosting productivity and improving family incomes. This doesn't simply benefit individual workers and families-it has ripple effects throughout the economy through reduced spending on safety net programs, a larger tax base and increased consumer spending.[7] Paid leave also reduces employers' costs due to improved retention.[8]

Despite widespread public support, paid leave is out of reach for many Louisianans.

Healthy employees are the cornerstone of healthy communities. A lack of paid sick days has serious implications for public health. Research has shown that, when workers lack access to paid sick days, they are 1.5 times more likely to go to work sick.[12] When employees go to work sick, they are likely to spread infectious illnesses to coworkers and customers. Two of the occupations least likely to offer sick leave (food preparation and personal care and service area professions) involve ongoing, close contact with others, increasing the risk of disease transmission.[13] Workers without paid sick days are also more likely to get injured on the job-one study with a sample size of 38,000 workers found that workers without access to sick days were 28% more likely to be injured.[14] While these outcomes have obvious negative implications for workers, they also increase employers' costs through decreased productivity and increased workers compensation claims.[15]

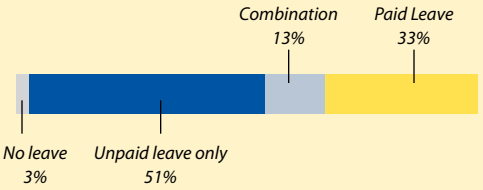
Lack of paid family and medical leave means that many workers can't take care of their loved ones, heal after an illness or birth, or have time to bond with their newborns. One in four working mothers in the U.S. returns to work within two weeks after childbirth[16] and one in six Americans spend an average of 20 hours a week taking care of sick or elderly relatives.[17] Providing paid leave for employees who are taking care of ill family members benefits senior citizens, as other states' experiences have shown. For example, after California implemented paid family leave, nursing home utilization went down by 11%.[18]



83%

of civilian workers in the South lack access to paid family leave.[9]

A majority of Louisiana mothers took only unpaid leave or no leave after giving birth in 2018.[10]



41%

of Louisiana workers lack access to paid sick days.[11]

Paid leave will improve outcomes for Louisiana children and mothers.

Louisiana has some of the worst outcomes in the nation for mothers and children. Paid family leave could help us live up to our ideals by taking care of our future citizens and leaders:

Current Outcomes in Louisiana	How Paid Family Leave Helps
Outcomes for Louisiana's babies are among the worst in the nation. Our infant mortality rate is 7.6 deaths per 1,000 babies, which is 33% higher than the national average.[19] More than one out of every ten Louisiana babies is born at a low birth-weight, which often means longer hospital stays and increases their risk of health complications.	An international study found that providing 10 weeks of paid leave resulted in a 10% lower neonatal and infant mortality rate.[20] In 2018, 454 Louisiana infants died in their first year of life. If we were able to achieve a 10% reduction, another 45 babies could have celebrated their first birthdays.
Louisiana had the nation's highest maternal mortality rate in the 2013-2017 time period. At 72 deaths per 100,000 live births, Louisiana's maternal mortality rate is 2.4 times the national average.[21]	Increasing access to paid leave will improve maternal mental health. Research shows that mothers who return to work after having less than 12 weeks of maternity leave and less than 8 weeks of paid leave have increased depressive symptoms and worse overall health.[22] Leave of up to 26 weeks (6 months) is associated with improved outcomes for mothers, including reductions in postpartum depression and maternal stress.[23]
Only 49% of Louisiana mothers breastfeed for more than eight weeks. Breastfeeding is associated with improved health outcomes for babies, including reduced risk for SIDS. Among Louisiana mothers that did not breastfeed at all, 13% cited their return to work as the reason they did not breastfeed.[24]	Research from California, which implemented a statewide paid leave policy in 2004, shows that paid family leave improved breastfeeding rates, and doubled the duration of breastfeeding among mothers who took paid leave, including among low-wage workers.[25]

We cannot continue to fail to act.

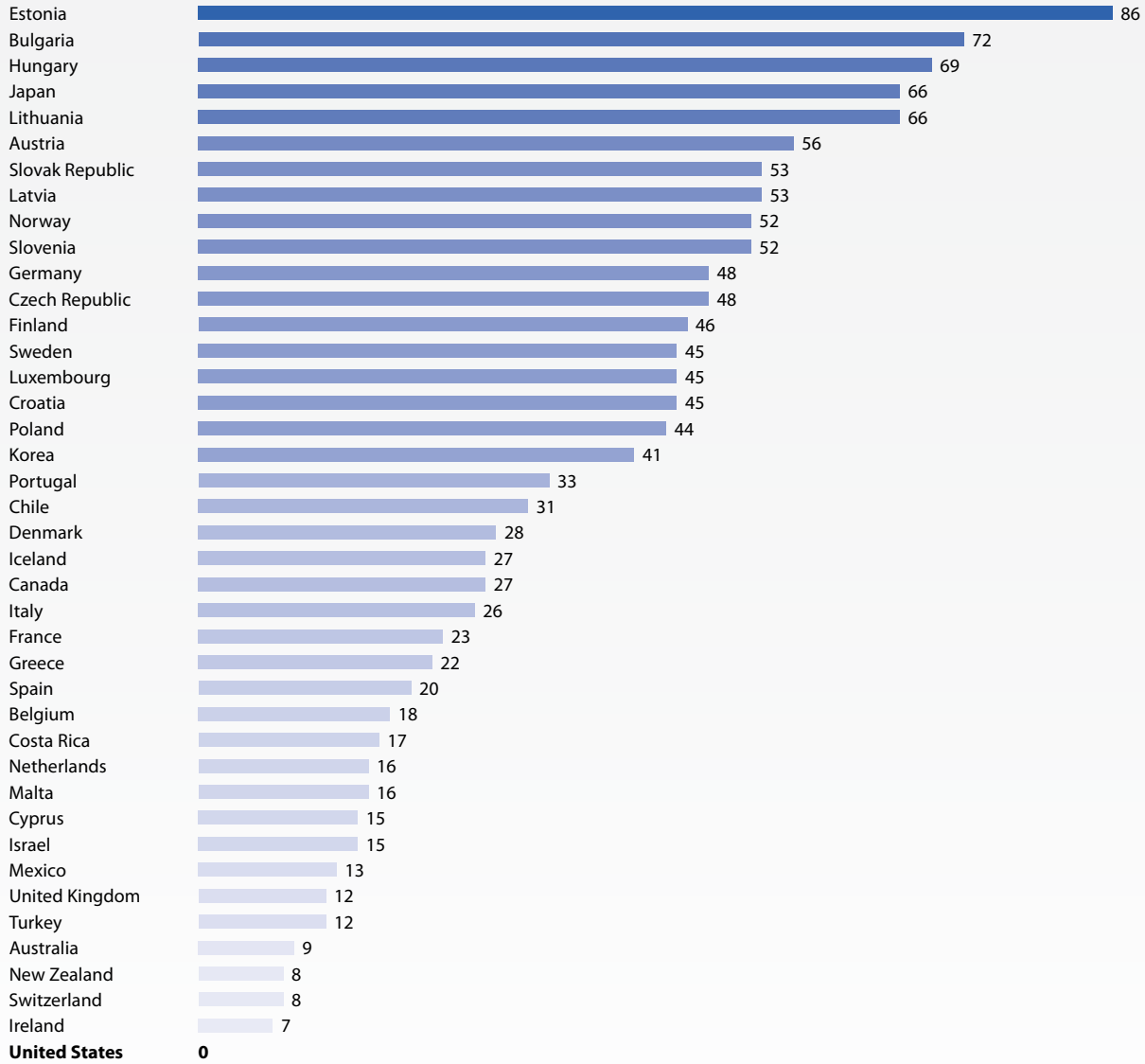
The COVID-19 pandemic has starkly underlined the inherent danger posed by this status quo. As of August 28, 2020, the virus has infected over 146,000 people in our state and claimed the lives of over 4,700 Louisianans.[26] Without access to paid sick days and paid family and medical leave, workers are more likely to endanger themselves, their loved ones and our community at large.

Workers already living in precarious financial conditions face additional burdens from our state's lack of paid sick and family and medical leave policies. The United Way of Southeast Louisiana's ALICE report found that a staggering 51% of Louisianans either live below the federal poverty threshold or qualify as ALICE-Asset Limited, Income Constrained and Employed. [27] ALICE families live paycheck to paycheck with little savings and are one major accident, medical bill, harsh storm or brief interruption in income away from poverty. Taking unpaid leave can lead to financial disaster for these families, increasing the disparities in poverty that plague our state. The stress of this economic insecurity doesn't simply affect someone's mental health-it can also have a serious impact on physical health outcomes as well. Two of the most surprising and consistent results of paid family leave policies internationally are reductions in low birthweight babies and preterm births, which are two outcomes that would ordinarily occur *before* someone takes their first day of paid leave. Researchers hypothesize that paid leave reduces women's stress about their economic security, and that stress reduction results in higher rates of women carrying their babies to full term.[28] Healthy and productive families are the foundation of a prosperous society. In order to build a stronger and more resilient Louisiana, we must adopt policies that support families and children.

The U.S. is an international outlier on paid leave.

The United States remains the only Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country without paid leave. Congress passed the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) in 1993, which guarantees 12 weeks of unpaid family and medical leave for qualifying employees. FMLA does not cover employees of businesses with fewer than 50 employees, and employees must have worked at least 1,250 hours at the employer in the year before the leave began. The most recent available data shows that only 59% of private sector workers in the U.S. are eligible for FMLA.[29] Because FMLA is unpaid, many eligible workers are unable to utilize it because they cannot afford to do so. Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows that almost half (46%) of eligible private-sector workers cannot afford to take leave.[30] While FMLA is called a "leave" act, it is, in effect, only a job protection act that prevents some employers from firing employees for taking needed leave.

THE U.S. IS THE ONLY OECD COUNTRY THAT DOES NOT MANDATE PAID LEAVE FOR NEW PARENTS



The U.S. offers zero days of paid leave to new parents.

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Family Database

Congress has started the work of building a stronger foundation.

The Families First Act

Congress took some limited (and temporary) steps to expand Americans' access to paid sick days and paid family and medical leave in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Families First Act, which was signed into law on March 18, 2020, provides paid leave for American workers affected by the pandemic. The following chart outlines the benefits provided by the Families First Act.

But the Families First Act notably does not cover large swaths of the American workforce:

WORKERS AT COMPANIES WITH 500 OR MORE EMPLOYEES

This exemption leaves the majority of U.S. workers without any of the protections laid out in the Families First Act-51.6 percent (or roughly 60 million) workers are employed by companies of 500 or more employees. [31]

WORKERS AT COMPANIES WITH 50 OR FEWER EMPLOYEES

The legislation allows employers of 50 or fewer workers to seek an exemption from the Department of Labor if they believe their business will be adversely affected by offering paid leave. The Department of Labor later enacted a rule that allows these employers to exempt themselves without justifying their choice to the agency. This effectively leaves an estimated 34 million workers at small businesses without guaranteed protections.

HEALTH PROVIDERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

Employees of hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and emergency responder firms (public or private) are exempted from the benefits of the legislation. This leaves our nation's health care professionals who are putting themselves and their families at risk daily on the frontlines of the pandemic response without any paid leave protections.

The Families First Act is historic as it is the first piece of federal legislation to guarantee paid leave benefits to American workers. However, it is far from a lasting and comprehensive solution. In addition to being temporary, its provisions exempt a majority of American workers from eligibility. Without further legislative action, the paid leave benefits provided in the Families First Act will fail to impact most Americans and will leave millions of families without these necessary supports.

A Summary of Paid Leave Provisions Offered by the Families First Act (2020)
Available Leave: Up to 80 hours of paid sick leave, and up to 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave
Eligible Employees: Full-time and part-time workers of employers of up to 500 employees, self-employed workers and gig economy workers
Source of Funding: Employers can claim a quarterly tax credit against payroll taxes. Congress appropriated funds from general taxes to the Social Security trust funds to ensure workers' retirement benefits are not affected.
Qualified Reasons for Paid Sick Days (up to 80 hours): ■ The employee is subject to a federal, state or local quarantine order related to COVID-19 or has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine. ■ The employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking medical diagnosis. ■ The employee is caring for an individual who is subject to a federal, state or local quarantine order, or the individual has been advised to self-quarantine. ■ The employee is caring for the employee's son or daughter, if the child's school or child care facility has been closed or the child's care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions.
Qualified Reasons for Paid Family and Medical Leave (up to 10 weeks): ■ The employee is caring for the employee's son or daughter, if the child's school or child care facility has been closed or the child's care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions.
Rate of Compensation: If the employee is quarantined and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis, employees are paid their regular rate of pay up to $511 per day during the 10 sick days. For all other allowable sick days and leave, employees are entitled to 2/3 their regular pay, up to $200 per day.
End of Families First Leave Provisions: The paid leave benefits provided in the Families First Act are in place until December 31, 2020 and workers cannot roll over their days of leave into 2021.

Louisianans have pushed for better paid sick and leave policies.

Advocates and lawmakers have led several campaigns in recent years to create paid leave policies and protections for Louisiana workers. The Louisiana Families First Coalition, which is made up of a broad range of advocates working on diverse issues, including early childhood, workers' rights, health and business coalitions, has been working at the local, state and national levels to fight for paid leave. The Louisiana Budget Project (LBP), a member of the coalition, has developed detailed financial models that show that a paid leave program that serves 80% of Louisiana's workforce would cost just 0.47% of payroll costs when fully implemented. The cost model showed that the weekly cost for most Louisiana workers would amount to "less than the price of a cappuccino."[32]

The work of these advocates has led to the introduction of a number of bills that would offer paid sick days or paid family leave over the past several years. The most recent such effort was House Bill 832 of the 2020 legislative session, which would have offered Louisiana workers paid sick days. While the efforts to date have not been successful, they have laid important groundwork for future leave policies.

Louisiana House Bill 832 (2020 Legislative Session)

In the 2020 Louisiana Legislative Session, State Representative Matthew Willard of New Orleans filed House Bill 832, which would have provided for paid sick leave for Louisiana workers. The following chart outlines the benefits provided by House Bill 832:

House Bill 832 would have left many Louisiana workers without access to paid sick days, including 297,000 workers employed by businesses with fewer than 20 employees, who account for 17% of our workforce. However, it was a strong step in the right direction, and would have allowed covered employees to take sick leave for a range of important needs, including medical treatment for oneself or a family member, domestic violence, school closures due to public health emergencies and attending school meetings related to a child's disability or health-related matters.

House Bill 832 would have been the first legislation in Louisiana to guarantee any kind of leave benefits for workers, but it did not gain traction among legislators and was involuntarily deferred in committee. Louisiana workers are left without any guaranteed short-term sick leave or long-term family and medical leave benefits as our state attempts to restart our economy amidst the continuing global pandemic.

A Summary of Paid Sick Leave Provisions Proposed in House Bill 832
Available Leave: Up to 40 hours of paid sick leave
Eligible Employees: Full-time and part-time workers of employers of 20 or more employees
Source of Funding: Employers would have been responsible for associated costs
Qualified Reasons for Paid Sick Days: ■ An employee's medical treatment or care for illness ■ Medical treatment or care for illness of a family member ■ Business closure due to a public health emergency ■ An employee's child's school closure due to a public health emergency. ■ Injuries sustained by the employee as a result of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking ■ An employee's attendance at a meeting at his child's school in relation to the child's disability or health-related matter
Rate of Compensation: Employees would have been paid at their regular rate of pay

Expanding access to paid leave is affordable for Louisiana.

Investing in expanded paid leave will result in significant savings for businesses through improved productivity, better retention and reduced workers compensation claims (in the case of paid sick days). Based on the experience of other states and cost models, expanding access to both paid sick days and family and medical leave will be affordable for Louisiana's employers and workers.

The Institute for Women's Policy Research and IMPAQ International estimated the cost of providing paid sick leave to workers and found that the cost of expanding San Francisco's sick leave policy nationwide would cost approximately 0.29% of payroll. San Francisco's sick day policy, which allows workers to earn one hour per 30 hours worked, is similar to the policies recommended in this report, though it caps the number of hours workers can earn at 40 hours for businesses with fewer than 10 employees.[33] After sick leave policies took effect in New York City, a survey of businesses found that almost 85% said that the law had no effect on their costs. Only three percent of businesses reported that their costs had increased by three percent or more.[34]

As noted above, the Louisiana Budget Project (LBP)'s financial models show that a paid family and medical leave program that serves 80% of Louisiana's workforce would cost just 0.47% of payroll costs when fully implemented. The LBP proposal would provide up to 12 weeks of leave and replace 90 percent of the wages of the lowest-wage workers, and replace higher wages at 50 percent, up to a maximum weekly benefit equal to the state average weekly wage (AWW). Consistent with the recommendations outlined in this brief, costs in the LBP model would be shared equally between employers and employees, for a total of about 50 cents for every $100 in earnings. Self-employed workers could opt in by paying both the employer and employee portions of the premiums, and the state would administer the program, similar to how it administers the unemployment insurance program.[35]

The direct costs of paid sick days and paid family and medical leave would likely be at least partially offset by savings from the myriad benefits of expanded leave. For example, both paid sick days and paid family and medical leave are associated with increased employee retention. The median cost of turnover across all occupations is 21% of an employee's annual salary, and can represent a significant cost for businesses with high rates of turnover.[36] Paid sick day laws alone are associated with job turnover reductions of 20 to 30 percent within two years of implementation.[37] While there are costs associated with increasing access to paid leave, there are also significant human and economic costs associated with the status quo. In much the same way that ignoring a cracked foundation can lead to much more costly home repairs later, the status quo, which leaves millions of hardworking Louisianans without access to paid leave, results in increased costs for businesses, our health care system and our broader economy.

Local governments should act now.

State-wide legislation would impact the largest number of Louisiana children and families, but local governments can also pursue leave policies in the absence of state policies. While Louisiana's pre-emption laws prohibit localities from passing leave laws that would cover all employees in a jurisdiction, local governments can use their own power as employers and contractors to increase the number of residents who benefit from paid leave.

- Parish and city governments can lead by example and implement the policies outlined above for all parish and municipal employees. New Orleans offers full-time city employees eight weeks of paid maternity and two weeks of paid paternity leave.
- Parishes and municipalities can follow the lead of New Orleans, where the city's Living Wage ordinance requires employers that contract with the city to provide at least 7 days of compensated leave to any covered worker, which is defined, in part, as a worker that performs work pursuant to the city contract.
- Local education agencies can enact similar policies for their workforce. Teachers in Louisiana are overwhelmingly female and, on average, receive salaries of $50,359 according to the National Education Association. This is about $1,691 below the regional average and almost $10,000 lower than the national average[38]. Providing paid family and medical leave could reduce teacher turnover, which would not only reduce costs for districts over the long-term, but could also improve student learning if more teachers remain in the workforce.

Citizens and municipalities can also push the Louisiana Legislature to repeal Louisiana's pre-emption laws, which prevent local governments from enacting regulations that would affect all workers in a city or parish, including minimum wage and paid leave policies.

There's no need to wait-businesses can pursue better policies immediately.

Businesses don't need to wait on government action-they can provide their employees with paid sick days and paid family and medical leave immediately.

Employer guidance for paid sick days

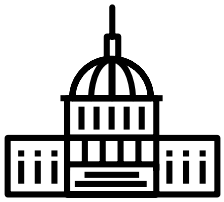
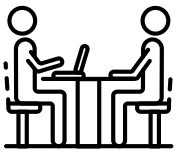
- **Cover as many employees as possible, including part-time and contract employees.** This ensures that a company can fully realize the benefits of paid sick time, particularly in terms of its role in preventing disease spread through "presenteeism." Many employers use a simple system for accruing sick time, such as one hour of paid sick time per 30 hours worked that makes it easy to administer a sick leave program for all employees.
- **Provide clear policy guidance on sick leave to all employees, and make it clear that they will not be penalized for using sick time.** Policies typically cover the conditions under which people can use sick days, when certification from a doctor is needed, how time is accrued and whether sick days can be carried over from one year to the next. To make the biggest impact on employees' health and healthcare costs, policies should allow staff to take sick time for doctors' visits for themselves and their immediate family.

Employer guidance for paid family and medical leave

Paid Leave for the United States (PL+US) has created a toolkit for businesses that provides the following principles for paid leave policies:

- **Cover everyone equally.** New parents should receive the same amount of leave, regardless of their gender or the circumstances through which a child joined the family (birth, adoption, foster care or surrogacy.)
- **Provide adequate time.** New parents should receive at least 12 weeks of paid leave, and employees should have at least six weeks of family and medical leave.
- **Make policies accessible.** All staff, including managers and human resources staff should be trained in the policy. Employers should create a company culture where employees feel comfortable taking leave when needed, and where no one receives retaliation for taking leave.

We all have roles to play in increasing access to paid leave for Louisiana's workers.

 **Legislators**	**Local Governments**	 **Employers**	**Voters & Employees**
■ Pass legislation guaranteeing paid sick days and paid family and medical leave for all Louisiana workers. ■ Repeal Louisiana's pre-emption laws, which prohibit local governments from requiring employers in their jurisdictions to provide paid sick days or family and medical leave.	■ Provide paid sick days and paid family and medical leave to everyone employed by your city/parish government, including part-time employees. ■ Require that any contractors provide sick days to employees working on city- or parish-contracted projects.	■ Provide paid sick days and paid family and medical leave benefits for all employees, including part-time workers. ■ Let your elected officials know that your business stands in support of paid sick days and paid family and medical leave.	■ Contact your elected officials to let them know you stand in support of paid sick days and paid family and medical leave. Share stories about how leave (or lack thereof) has affected you and your family. ■ If your employer does not offer paid family and medical leave, PL+US has a **toolkit** you can use to help make the case to your employer.

Conclusion

As Louisianans, we are an extraordinarily resourceful and resilient people. We have had to rebuild our communities after countless floods and hurricanes, and we have always persevered and come back stronger. COVID-19 has battered our economy and killed more than 4,700 of our friends and loved ones. As we work to recover, we must be deliberate about how we strengthen our state, focusing on the things that build a strong and lasting foundation of well-being, so that we weather future storms. We know the kinds of things we need to build a thriving, more equitable economy. Enacting paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave are the materials that contribute to the ongoing construction project of community well-being. This ongoing process of repair and maintenance is going to require all of our efforts, but by coming together as a community to do this work, we can become national leaders in promoting and sustaining the health of all our residents, and especially our children.

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