



PAID FAMILY LEAVE LEGISLATIVE TOOLKIT

Conservatives have long known that the key to strong community is strong families. Paid Family Leave, after the birth or adoption of a new baby, fits our priorities and values. This kit explains the details and why it is a winning issue from both a policy perspective and with public opinion.





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Learn the statistics about paid family leave.



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Three separate paid family leave plans that support families after the birth or adoption of a child have been introduced in Congress by Republicans. Learn the details and how they fit our values.



EFFECTIVE MESSAGING 7

We show the many ways to talk about paid family leave including how most workers don't have access, how it improves health and welfare of children, keeps parents off public assistance, increases father's involvement, helps budget by increasing birthrate, reduces abortion, and more.



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Read quotes from Senators Marco Rubio, Bill Cassidy, Joni Ernst, Mike Lee, Former Senator Rick Santorum, Representatives Dan Crenshaw and Ann Wagner as well as conservative leaders.



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Support for paid family leave now crosses all party, gender, and ideological lines and has support among all ethnicities. It appears to be a winning issue for all legislators, even Republicans from very conservative districts.



LEGISLATOR HANDOUT 15

Template for legislators to use in creating handout to communicate support for paid family leave to constituents.



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National and State-based articles on paid leave.



PAID FAMILY LEAVE FACT SHEET



Learn more at
www.PaidLeaveForFamilies.com

Imagine if all families could welcome a new baby or adopted child by spending the first few months together bonding as a family. What kind of impact could that have on our nation?

THE NEED:

- Only 23% of workers (9% of low-wage workers) have access to paid family leave after the birth or adoption of a child¹
- 64% of households with children have both parents working²
- 25% of households with children are headed by a single parent³
- 23% of all mothers go back to work within two weeks of giving birth⁴
- 44% of Americans cannot cover an unexpected \$400 expense⁵

HELPS FEDERAL BUDGET:

- Could increase future taxpayers by reversing the plummeting birthrate of 1.64 live births per woman, the lowest level ever recorded. (need 2.1 in order to maintain taxpayer population).⁶

PRO-LIFE:

- Supports pro-life choices as most women who have abortions cite the inability to afford a child as a key determiner in their decision.⁷

IMPORTANCE OF BONDING:

- Studies show that early bonding is crucial for the long-term mental health and resilience of children.⁸
- Fathers also produce the love hormone “oxytocin” when with their baby those first few weeks, leading to them being more involved in childrearing later.⁹

HEALTH OF BABY:

- 10 weeks of paid maternal leave was associated with a 10% lower infant mortality rate¹⁰
- Babies with mothers at home are more likely to be breastfed and have regular doctors’ visits¹¹

INFANT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT:

- Infants with increased activity of higher-frequency brain waves were 7.39 times more likely to have mothers with paid leave
- Babies whose mothers received three months of paid leave have more complex brain wave patterns

HEALTH OF MOTHER:

- Women with at least 12 weeks of paid leave reported fewer depressive symptoms and better mental and physical health¹²

KEEPS MOTHERS OFF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND CONNECTED TO WORKFORCE:

- 48% with household incomes under \$30,000 go on public assistance after the birth of a baby¹³
- After taking paid leave, mothers are 39% less likely to go on public assistance and 40% less likely to need food stamps¹⁴
- Women who had access to PFL at the time of the birth are more likely to be in the labor force up to five years after that birth.

BENEFITS BUSINESSES:

- 90% employers reported a positive impact or no impact from introduction of paid leave policies¹⁵

PUBLIC SUPPORT:

- 71% of registered voters support paid leave for parents, crossing party, gender, and ideological lines (65% of conservatives, 68% of moderates, 83% of liberals)¹⁶
- Hispanic voters, who are critical to building winning coalitions, support paid leave at 80%, with 53% supporting strongly

FITS CONSERVATIVE VALUES:

- No mandates on business, fiscally responsible, optional.

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- 3 Livingston, Gretchen. 2019. "Facts On Unmarried Parents in the U.S." Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project.
- 4 Paquette, Danielle. 2015. "The Shocking Number of New Moms Who Return to Work Two Weeks after Childbirth." The Washington Post.
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CONSERVATIVE PAID FAMILY LEAVE LEGISLATION

Several plans have been introduced in Congress that support parents after the birth or adoption of a child. It is encouraging to see these innovative plans that are fiscally responsible, do not put mandates on businesses, and are completely optional.

CHILD TAX CREDIT PLANS

Advancing Support for Working Families Act

Sponsored by Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ). Introduced in 2019, planning to reintroduce in the Senate.

The bipartisan proposal allows parents to advance \$5,000 from their Child Tax Credit (CTC) upon the birth or adoption of a child to be used for paid leave, childcare, or any other cost. In that respect, it is not a traditional paid family leave plan. Today, parents can claim an annual CTC on their taxes of up to \$2,000 for each child under age 17. Under this plan, parents would have the option to advance that \$5,000 and then repay by reducing their annual CTC by \$500 over each of the following 10 years. Enrollment in this plan would be optional.

Support Working Families Act

Sponsored by Senator Todd Young (R-IN). Introduced in 2019.

This similar plan also offers a refundable Child Tax Credit (CTC) but specifically for those who take leave from employment following the birth or adoption of a child. They would be allowed to advance up to \$6,000.

SOCIAL SECURITY PLANS

The New Parents Act

Sponsored by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Mitt Romney (R-IA) and Representatives Ann Wagner (R-MO) and Dan Crenshaw (R-TX). Introduced in 2019 and reintroduced in the Senate in September 2021.

The Child Rearing and Development Leave Empowerment (CRADLE) Act

Sponsored by Senators Joni Ernst (R-IA) and Mike Lee (R-UT). Planning to introduce it in the Senate.

Both plans allow new parents to receive one, two, or three months of paid leave benefits after the birth or adoption of a child. They would then delay activating retirement benefits administered by the Social Security Administration for two, four, or six months. Senator Rubio's plan would also allow parents to transfer benefits between each other. Both plans have certain work-history requirements but stay-at-home parents who have past substantial work history would be eligible as well. Both plans are optional.

TAX CREDIT FOR EMPLOYERS

Strong Families Act - already passed and implemented

Sponsored by Senators Deb Fischer (R-NE) and Angus King (I-ME) and Representatives Mike Kelly (R-PA) and Terri Sewell (D-AL). Introduced in 2017 and incorporated in President Trump's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act for a two-year pilot. Was expanded for 5 years in the 2020 year-end COVID-relief and spending package.

This plan created a five-year, 25 percent tax credit for employers who voluntarily offer up to 12 weeks of paid family leave to employees. It is available to men or women and both salaried and hourly employees. This leave is available to care for a newborn, newly adopted or foster child, for a family member with a serious health condition, and to recover from a serious health condition.



WHAT CONSERVATIVE LEADERS ARE SAYING

In Support of Paid Family Leave

“American families are the heart, soul and backbone of our nation. Strong and loving families build up our neighborhoods, sustain our communities, invigorate our cities, pass down our values and make a brighter future for every citizen...It’s time to pass Paid Family Leave...”

— **President Donald Trump, during White House Summit on Child Care and Paid Leave**

“Families are the bedrock of our society. If young people can’t afford to marry and start a family, then the American dream literally has no future.”

— **Senator Mike Lee (R-UT)**

“Paid Family Leave is incredibly related to the pro-life issue.”

— **Abby Johnson, Pro-Life Leader from movie Unplanned**

“Republicans need to roll up their sleeves, reach across the aisle, and get a new federal paid-leave program enacted. Paid parental leave is good policy and good politics.”

— **Rick Santorum, former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania**

“The problems stemming from financial insecurity around having kids, such as increased debt, welfare receipt, reduced birth weight and negative cognitive outcomes for children and increased family instability are increasingly concentrated among middle and working-class moms and dads — the backbone of our country...It makes it harder for young Americans to start families and weakens the family — the bedrock institution of our society.”

— **Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL)**

“A supportive family program such as this (CRADLE ACT) is a great addition to a post-Roe society. The more safety nets and resources available for families, the more unthinkable abortion becomes.”

— **Kristen Hawkins, President of Students for Life**

“Families are forced to choose between their financial well-being and the well-being of their child,” Crenshaw wrote in a tweet. “That’s wrong. Let’s fix it.”

— Representative Dan Crenshaw (R-TX)

“There is no bigger kitchen table issue than a mother and a father being able to care for their newborn. In many cases, the first year of life is the most expensive for a family. This legislation addresses this, focuses resources and eases financial strain to provide a longer bonding period for the family. As a doctor, I know that if a mom and dad are able to have a deeper connection with their child at birth, it’s better for the health of the baby and the mother. ”

— Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D., (R-LA)

“It’s past time we modernize our family leave policies to reflect the evolving needs of today’s workforce and to reduce the barriers that pose challenges for parents balancing family and work... Our proposal is a path forward for a budget neutral paid leave option that gives parents greater flexibility without imposing a new government entitlement or mandate.”

— Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA)

“Although paid family leave is of course only one small step toward helping reverse the anti-family trends of recent decades, it is a step nonetheless. If conservatives are to rebuild a culture of healthy families in America, it will in all likelihood be through gradual strides such as this.”

— Terry Schilling, President of American Principles Project

“Developing solutions to help new parents and working families thrive in this modern workforce is necessary for the continued economic success of our nation and the well-being of the next generation of Americans.”

— Representative Elise Stefanik (R, NY)



EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

On Paid Family Leave

It is easy to talk about paid family leave (PFL) because of its popularity with Republicans and Democrats as well as its many benefits to families and society. While PFL has many applications – parental leave following the birth or adoption of a new child, family caregiving leave to care for a loved one, or personal medical leave – parental leave is very popular with conservatives and an important policy to advance in the pro-family agenda. Depending on the audience and what resonates the most personally, one can choose a few of the topics below to make a strong argument in support of this important policy.

MOST WORKERS DO NOT HAVE PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

Strong families are the key to strong communities. Currently, only 23% of Americans (9% of low wage workers) have access to PFL after the birth or adoption of a child.¹ Because of this, a quarter of all mothers go back to work within 10-14 days after having a child, with fathers going back even sooner.² A federal PFL policy would ensure that all families have time together after the birth or adoption of a new child, giving every family the best opportunity to start off strong.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IMPROVES THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN.

Studies show that children who are deprived of early bonding with parents have negative physical and mental health outcomes.³ PFL allows time together as a family, regardless of income, so every child develops strong bonds with their parents. In addition, having ten weeks of PFL was associated with a 10% lower neonatal and infant mortality rate.⁴ With mothers at home, children are also more likely to be breastfed and have regular doctors' visits.⁵ Children benefit by having their parents home those first few months of life.

INFANT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IMPACTED BY PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Research shows that infants with increased activity of higher-frequency brain waves were 7.39 times more likely to have mothers with paid leave.⁶ Infants whose mothers received three months of paid leave also had more complex brain wave patterns. Those first few months are especially important for brain development as the neural connections in the infant brain emerge with warm, predictable, and responsive social interactions with their parents. The infant brain is highly plastic, adapting to the environment but also susceptible to negative experiences like parental stress.⁷ There are life-long benefits for infants who have parents home those first few months.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE KEEPS PARENTS OFF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND CONNECTED TO WORKFORCE.

Some new parents are forced out of the workforce and onto public assistance in order to spend time together during those first few months after the birth of a new baby.⁸ Research confirms that mothers who have PFL are 39% less likely to receive public assistance and 40% less likely to use food stamps.⁹ Women who had access to PFL at the time of the birth are 3% to 6% more likely to be in the labor force up to five years after that birth, representing a 20-50 percent reduction in maternal labor market detachment.¹⁰ PFL keeps workers connected to the workforce and ready to return when their leave is over, increasing positive outcomes for the mother and the child. Since the parents continue to be taxpayers instead of government aid recipients, this also has a positive impact on the federal budget.

STUDIES SHOW INCREASED INVOLVEMENT OF FATHERS BECAUSE OF PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

Research indicates that even fathers produce the “love hormone” oxytocin that mothers produce when in close contact with a new child, creating strong, lifelong bonds.¹¹ Other studies show that fathers who take PFL are more likely to be involved in child rearing. Then, children with highly involved fathers perform better in cognitive tests.¹² It is clear that families and society benefit when fathers and children have time to develop strong bonds at the beginning of a child’s life.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS PRO-LIFE AND REDUCES ABORTION

Most women seeking abortions cite cost as the main determining factor and how that would interfere with work, school, or the ability to care for other children.¹³ In addition, 49% of those seeking an abortion live below the federal poverty level, where only 9% have access to PFL.¹⁴ Imagine having a PFL policy that promotes life by supporting a mother to stay home and care for her newborn.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE HELPS THE FEDERAL BUDGET BY INCREASING BIRTHRATE.

The number of babies born in the United States just hit the lowest rate in the past 30 years, at 1.64 live births per woman, a sharp decline from the rate of 2.12 in 2007.¹⁵ In order to maintain our population and taxpayer base, we need a replacement rate of 2.1.¹⁶ Surveys show that women’s preference for childbearing would produce a birthrate of 2.7.¹⁷ Having a federal PFL policy would go far towards supporting families to have the number of children they desire.

THE ECONOMY HAS CHANGED, FAMILY-WAGE JOBS ARE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN FOR YOUNG PARENTS.

In previous generations, most full-time jobs paid enough to raise a family. Currently, family-wage jobs are more difficult to find, especially for young workers. 44% of all workers are considered “low wage,” earning an annual salary of \$18,000 with an hourly wage of \$10.22.¹⁸ The Federal Reserve has reported that 44% of Americans are unable to afford a \$400 emergency, with 17% unable to pay all their bills in full each month.¹⁹ A federal PFL policy ensures that a new child is not a financial catastrophe, regardless of income or age of parents.

GOP SUPPORTED PAID FAMILY LEAVE PLANS ARE FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE.

Republicans have taken a lead in introducing conservative plans to support families. Senators Marco Rubio and Mitt Romney along with Representatives Ann Wagner and Dan Crenshaw introduced The New Parents Act in March of 2019, which was introduced again in the Senate in 2021.²⁰ Senators Mike Lee and Joni Ernst announced a similar plan called The Child Rearing and Development Leave Empowerment (CRADLE) Act in 2019 that they hope to introduce in the coming months.²¹ Both of these plans allow parents to withdraw Social Security benefits to stay home after the birth or adoption of a new child and then pay the cost back by simply retiring a few months later than they would have otherwise. The first bipartisan plan, The Advancing Support for Working Families Act, was introduced in December by Senators Bill Cassidy and Kyrsten Sine-

ma.²² This plan allows new parents to receive \$5000, and then reduce their Child Tax Credit (CTC) deduction on their federal taxes by \$500 annually over the course of 10 years in order to pay it back. Senator Todd Young introduced a similar bill using CTC specifically to fund leave after the birth or adoption of a child. In 2017, Senators Deb Fischer and Angus King and Representatives Mike Kelly and Terri Sewell introduced legislation offering a 25% tax credit for businesses offering leave. That was incorporated into President Trump's Tax Cuts and Job Act for a two-year trial, which was expanded by five years in the 2020 year-end COVID-relief and spending package. Since there are so many benefits to having a federal PFL policy, these plans offer a strong return on investment by strengthening families without adding to the budget deficit.

THERE IS WIDE SUPPORT FOR PAID FAMILY LEAVE, EVEN AMONG THE MOST CONSERVATIVE AUDIENCES.

PFL now has broad support (71%) that crosses party, gender, and ideological lines with support coming from conservatives (65%), moderates (68%), liberals (83%) and all ethnicities.²³ In fact, 58% of conservatives and 53% of GOP primary voters believe that some sort of benefit ought to be available to parents after the birth or adoption of a child. Hispanic voters, who are critical to building winning coalitions, support paid leave at 80%, with 53% supporting strongly. Paid leave is no longer a controversial issue, rather one that resonates with a plurality of voters.²⁴

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS AND THE ECONOMY.

Business owners have become advocates for a federal PFL policy because it would help them to reduce costs and level the playing field for businesses of all sizes. Employers also know that providing supportive programs like PFL will help them with worker retention and the recruitment of employees while increasing worker productivity.²⁵ Nearly 90 percent of employers in California have reported a positive impact or no impact from the introduction of a state plan.²⁶ There is now broad support in the business community for a federal paid family leave plan.

STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SICK LEAVE AND PAID MEDICAL FAMILY LEAVE DURING COVID.

Most Americans believe that all workers should be able to stay home if ill or caring for ill family members (83% vs. 8%). Polls show that 87% of Americans supported the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which provided federal funds to keep employees on payroll temporarily during the height of COVID19. With schools and daycare closed, 66% supported paid leave to care for children, with just 15% opposing.²⁷

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- 6 Brito, Natalie, David Werchan, Annie Brandes-Aitkens et al. 2022. "[Paid maternal leave is associated with infant brain function at 3 months of age.](#)" Society for Research in Child Development.
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POLLING SUMMARY

Paid family leave is a winning Republican and conservative issue.

Paid family leave is widely supported by swing voters, and even by conservatives, Trump voters, and GOP primary voters.

CRITICAL VOTER GROUPS SAY THAT PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE TO THEM AS THEY CONSIDER FOR WHOM THEY WILL VOTE.

- **Hispanic voters** are almost twice as likely as other voters to say paid family leave is a major or top issue for them when deciding for whom to vote. They strongly agree that paid family leave should be available to parents, with 80% of Hispanic respondents agreeing (and 48% strongly agreeing) that such benefits should be available.
- Half of all **moms** in the survey consider paid family leave to be a major or top issue. This is twice as many who consider paid family leave to be important compared to those in the sample survey without kids in the home.

CONSERVATIVES AND REPUBLICAN PRIMARY VOTERS SUPPORT PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

- **Conservative voters** and **Republican primary voters** are largely of the view that paid family leave benefits should be available. Some 58% of conservatives and 53% of GOP primary voters believe some form of benefits ought to be available. And among these voters, the opposition is relatively weak; fewer than one in seven say they strongly disagree that benefits should be available.

FURTHERMORE, EVEN LARGER MAJORITIES SAY IT IS IMPORTANT TO GIVE PEOPLE THE ABILITY TO STAY HOME IF THEY FEEL SICK OR TO CARE FOR A SICK LOVED ONE.

- By broadening the way paid family leave is defined, voters of all kinds can see clearly how they might benefit from greater availability of leave - and sizable majorities of key voter groups for Republicans ranging from **undecided voters** (76%) to **Republican primary voters** (65%) all believe such leave is important.

AND AMERICANS WANT A BIPARTISAN SOLUTION.

- A plurality of respondents - 48% - prefer a bipartisan paid leave plan over one that is just pushed by the majority in Congress (22%) or none at all (14%). **Hispanic voters** (52%), **seniors** (51%), and even **conservatives** (50%) are among the most interested in a bipartisan approach.

Commissioned by the Clapham Group, results from the Echelon Insights survey were taken March 18-21, 2022, polling N = 1,050 registered voters nationwide on paid family leave/paid sick leave. Additional results are available [here](#).



COMMUNICATING PAID LEAVE

Examples of how to communicate support for Paid Family Leave

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS PRO-FAMILY

- Strong families are the key to strong communities. Societies can not flourish if the family is not healthy
- There is much evidence that shows that the first few months of a child's life are determinative of that child's psychological, emotional and economic success and therefore early bonding with parents is critical.
- It is clear that families and society benefit when mothers and fathers have time to develop strong bonds at the beginning of a child's life.
- A federal PFL policy would ensure that all families have time together after the birth or adoption of a new child, giving every family the best opportunity to start off strong.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS PRO-WOMEN

- Currently, only 19% of Americans have access to PFL¹ and a quarter of all mothers go back to work within 10-14 days after having a child²
- Women with at least 12 weeks of paid leave reported fewer depressive symptoms and better mental and physical health³
- Studies show that mothers who have PFL are 39% less likely to receive public assistance and 40% less likely to use food stamps⁴
- PFL keeps mothers connected to the workforce and ready to return when the leave is over, increasing positive outcomes for both mother and child.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS PRO-BUSINESS

- Today there are several proposals in Congress that do not impose any new mandates or any new entitlements on businesses, but rather flexibility around already existing programs.
- PFL can be done in a fiscally responsible way that helps new parents, families and businesses all at the same time.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS PRO-LIFE

- Studies show that most women seeking abortions cite the cost of having a child as a determining factor⁵
- A PFL policy that promotes life by supporting a mother to stay home and care for her newborn.

Sources:

- 1 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- 2 Department of Labor
- 3 Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics
- 4 Rutgers University
- 5 Guttmacher Institute



PAID LEAVE ARTICLES

National

[A Marshall Plan for the Pro-Life Cause](#) - Mark Rodgers and Kiki Bradley

[Infant Brain Study Helps Make Case for Universal US Paid Leave Policy](#) - Jade McClain

[What We Know About Paternity Leave](#) - Kay Hymowitz

[Working Moms Will Not Wait Forever for Solutions](#) - Adrienne Schweer

[Biden's Family Agenda, One Year In](#) - Abby M. McCloskey

[Why Paid Leave is a Human Issue, Not a Political One](#) - Indra Nooyi

[Christians Shouldn't Need a Mandate to Provide Paid Family Leave](#) - Bonnie Kristian

[Without Roe, the GOP Must take Responsibility to Care for More Babies](#) - Abby McCloskey

[Morning Consult Poll: The Value of Paid Family Leave](#) - Bipartisan Policy Center

[National Paid Leave Could Change the American Caregiving Experience](#) - Nancy Leamond and Molly Day

[Works and Families are Fighting for Paid Time to Care](#) - Carol Joyner

[Our Policies are Failing Working Mothers](#) - Kelly Nicole

[Births are Back: Did Government Stimulus Fuel a Baby Boomlet?](#) - Lyman Stone

[A New Mom Had to Return to Work 12 Days after giving Birth - Then Strangers Showed Up in a Powerful Way](#) - Anne Marie Williams

[Welcome Home: A Woman Choice to Prioritize Caregiving Over Career](#) - J. Taylor Calderone

[American Families Need Paid Leave](#) - Kelly Rosati

State

Florida: [The Value of Family Leave - A Dad's Voice](#) - Santiago Avila

Ohio: [Opinion: paid leave critical if Roe overturned](#) - Laura Strietman

Iowa: [Family Leave is a Bipartisan Solution](#) - Bob Vander Plaats

Iowa: [Let's Make Paid Family Leave Possible](#) - Bob Vander Plaats

Utah: [Perspective: What family policy should look like in Post-Roe America](#) - Brad Wilcox

West Virginia: [Paid Family Leave is An Economic issue not a partisan one](#) - Beth Bloch

Pennsylvania: [Jeff Coleman: A conservative's case for paid family leave](#) - Jeff Coleman

Idaho: [Crapo Should Support Paid Family Leave](#) - Cat Jones

Idaho: [Support paid family leave legislation](#) - Gretchen Manning

Idaho: [Idaho delegation should support family leave legislation](#) - Gretchen Manning

Florida: [Parental leave for adoption parents is important for families, businesses](#) - Kurt Kelly

Indiana: [Paid family leave makes sense. Funding solutions must make sense, too](#) - Rob Panos

Maine: [Conservatives need to step up present a paid leave plan of their own](#) - Abby McCloskey



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