



Mothers' Views on the FAMILY ACT
Report of Findings

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For consideration at the
Exploring Paid Leave: Policy, Practice, and Impact on the Workforce Hearing
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Introduction

In August 2023, Count on Mothers conducted research to find out mothers' views and experiences relating to the FAMILY Act. Actionable Insights are provided followed by the full research summaries. We conduct research because we believe that mothers' first-hand experiences and knowledge are critical sources of information in the federal policy making process, particularly on bills that affect kids or the conditions of raising a family in the U.S. We share this data with legislators and the public so that they may have a better understanding of how a bill could help or hurt a family. The full report is posted on <https://www.countonmothers.org/>.

Actionable Insights at a Glance from Quantitative Study

From Mothers We Surveyed

- This bill contains points of mostly alignment with some differences among Mothers.
- Overwhelmingly, Mothers were aligned across the political spectrum on the following:
 - Employees should have up to 12 weeks of partial income when they take time off from work for reasons relating to health, caregiving, and/ or military deployment of a relative.
 - Employees who have worked for more than 90 days at the same job should be able to return to their jobs after paid leave and without retaliation from employers.
 - Mothers believe that full-time employees should earn up to 2/3 of their regular wages on this paid leave.
- The majority of mothers – regardless of political ideology – agreed on the importance of providing paid leave to employees regardless of company size, full-time/part-time status, and/ or self-employment status. However, there was variation within each political ideology and particularly, a conservative split between conservative and very conservative members with conservative Mothers more likely than very conservative Mothers to support this provision.
- Aside from Mothers who identify as very conservative, Mothers believe that lowest-paid employees should earn up to 85% of their regular wages on this paid leave.
- Overall, Mothers across the political spectrum supported this item with very strong support from all but very conservative Mothers.

Actionable Insights at a Glance from Qualitative Study

From Mothers We Interviewed

- Similar themes arose among all five mothers regardless of political ideology, including the difficult balance of caregiving and employment, an array of stressors related to child bearing and child rearing, including health needs, all of which impacted their lives in stressful ways.
- They each identify that their privilege - or access to private resources - alleviated some of their own stress and they recognize that not all mothers have access to such resources.
- The five mothers provided assessment of the FAMILY Act that evidence their support of the FAMILY Act — they liked the broader inclusivity overall, believed the safety net provisions would be critical to families, and provided additional comments related to the bill to be written and to be implemented correctly.
- Finally, the five mothers believe the FAMILY Act would create a paradigm that would have a positive health impact on families and a positive shift in the domain of care giving, paid leave, and employment.

Takeaway Theme from Qualitative Study: Need for U.S. to Change Paradigm on Paid Leave

Across political ideologies, participants shared that the United States needs to shift its paradigm on paid leave - although recognizing this will be a slow process.

[The FAMILY Act bill] kind of changes the mindset of people around you that this is just the way that it is. Sort of like FMLA, you know? It's federal, you know, it's something that's expected. It's an expected way we're supposed to treat each other with humanity rather than, oh, I have a good job with good benefits, but you don't. (Moderate Mother, age 51)

It's something that we should have had a long time ago, something the rest of the world has had. It's us and I think six countries with no form of paid leave. So this to me is one of the most important things Congress can do and I hope that they do very soon. (Liberal Mother, age 41)

I do think that, yes, if you have institutional change and it's kind of... I hate to use this word, but forced from the government onto companies and organizations to expect this, to know that this is happening, this is how things operate now. I do think that over time, it's not gonna be right away because people's minds don't change right away. But I do think that over years, the expectation that people have people to care for, whether it's an infant or parents or...sick kids or whatever, that there is more compassion, that taking time off to take care of people in your life is okay. And that's good and it's valuable and it's to be respected. (Conservative Mother, age 37)

So I want progress when it comes to paid parental leave. We are so far behind, as you know, the rest of the world regarding offering what I think is a human right, a right to bond postpartum with your baby, with your family, figure out how to do things like nursing if that's what you're doing or feeding in general and sleep, all this. And so I think that's a human right. I think right now what we're doing without having a federal paid leave is frankly inhumane. I think it's actually, it's barbaric right, what we put mothers and families through. So to me I think we have a long way to go. (Liberal Mother, age 40)

I do think we need to support parents in the workforce absolutely. I think we need to have policies in this country that support motherhood that support families but at the same time I have these principles of limited government, of wanting people to do things on their own, and like the two conflict with each other on this particular thing. And so I don't know what the right answer is. I don't know how best to do this. I do know that we need to do something as a country, because I know there's also women who are lower income and they're single moms. you know, a few part-time jobs, they're patching together and they don't get any benefits and they're going back to work two days after they have a baby and that is not right. (Conservative Mother, age 40)

Findings from Quantitative Study of Mothers Surveyed

9 in 10 Mothers Surveyed Believed:

- Employees should have up to 12 weeks of partial income when they take time off from work for reasons relating to health, caregiving, and/ or military deployment of a relative.
 - o Overwhelmingly, Mothers were aligned across the political spectrum on this issue. 96% of Mothers who identified as conservative and 79% who identified as very conservative agreed with this statement. 4% of conservative and 21% of very conservative Mothers expressed uncertainty or disagreement.
 - o 95% of Mothers who identified as moderate agreed with this statement. 5% of moderate Mother expressed uncertainty or disagreement.
 - o 100% of Mothers who identified as liberal and 98% of Mothers who identified as very liberal agreed with this statement. 2% of very liberal mothers voiced uncertainty.
- Employees who have worked for more than 90 days at the same job should be able to return to their jobs after paid leave and without retaliation from employers.
 - o The trend showed that overwhelmingly, Mothers largely agreed - regardless of their political ideologies.
 - o For example, 100% of Mothers who identified as conservative and 86% who identified as very conservative agreed with this issue. 14% of very conservative mothers disagreed with this statement.
 - o 99% of Mothers who identified as moderate agreed with this statement. 1% of moderate Mothers expressed uncertainty.
 - o 96% of Mothers who identified as liberal and 96% of Mothers who identified as very liberal agreed with this statement. 4% of liberal and 5% of very liberal Mothers expressed uncertainty or disagreement.
- Full-time employees should earn up to 2/3 of their regular wages on this paid leave.
 - o 88% of Mothers who identified as conservative and 64% who identified as very conservative agreed with this issue. 12% of conservative Mothers and 36% of very conservative mothers were uncertain or disagreed with this statement.
 - o 94% of Mothers who identified as moderate agreed with this statement. 6% of moderate Mothers expressed uncertainty or disagreement.
 - o 97% of Mothers who identified as liberal and 98% of Mothers who identified as very liberal agreed with this statement. 2% of liberal and 2% of very liberal Mothers were uncertain.

- Lowest-paid employees should earn up to 85% of their regular wages on this paid leave.
 - o Conservative mothers varied on this issue. 76% of Mothers who identified as conservative agreed with this issue while 57% who identified as very conservative were uncertain or disagreed with this issue. 24% of conservative Mothers joined very conservative Mothers in being uncertain or disagreeing with this statement. In contrast, 43% of Mothers who were very conservative supported this issue.
 - o 92% of Mothers who identified as moderate agreed with this statement. 8% of moderate Mothers expressed uncertainty or disagreement.
 - o 97% of Mothers who identified as liberal and 98% of Mothers who identified as very liberal agreed with this statement. 3% of liberal Mothers and 2% of very liberal Mothers voiced uncertainty.

8 in 10 Mothers surveyed believed:

- The "FAMILY Act" will (or would have had) a positive impact on their families.
 - o Mothers across the political spectrum supported this item with very strong support from all but very conservative Mothers.
 - o 88% of Mothers who identified as conservative and 57% of very conservative supported the Family Act. 12% of conservative Mothers and 43% of very conservative mothers were uncertain or disagreed with supporting the FAMILY Act.
 - o 90% of Mothers who identified as moderate agreed with this statement. 10% of moderate Mothers expressed uncertainty or disagreement with the FAMILY Act.
 - o 93% of Mothers who identified as liberal and 95% of Mothers who identified as very liberal agreed with this statement. 7% of liberal Mothers and 5% of very liberal Mothers expressed uncertainty or disagreement with the FAMILY Act.
- Paid leave should apply to employees regardless of company size, full-time/part-time status, and/ or self-employment status.
 - o 80% of Mothers who identified as conservative agreed with this issue and 57% of conservative Mothers supported this issue.
 - o 87% of Mothers who identified as moderate agreed with this statement. 13% of moderate Mothers expressed uncertainty or disagreement.
 - o 93% of Mothers who identified as liberal and 91% of Mothers who identified as very liberal agreed with this statement.

Political Ideology

In the overall sample, 37% of Mothers identify as Liberal while 29% of Mothers identify as Moderate and 8% of Mothers identify as Conservative. On either of the political ideology spectrum, Mothers who were Very Liberal accounted for 19% of the sample while Mothers who were Very Conservative represented 4% of the sample.

	# of Mothers Responding	Percent of Sample
Very Liberal	57	18.6%
Liberal	114	37.1%
Moderate	90	29.3%
Conservative	23	7.5%
Very Conservative	13	4.2%
Other	10	3.3%
	307	100.0%

State of Residence

Mothers reside in 41 states. The states that have the most representation are California (48), Florida (39), New York (21), Virginia (17), North Carolina (15), Illinois (12), Texas (11), and Wisconsin (11).