

Jocelyn Frye NPWF - 12:17:21, 1.24 PM

[00:00:00] **Katie Breen:** hi, this is Katie Breen and welcome to the Femtastic podcast. Today on the podcast, we are talking about something that has been really top of mind in the last COVID years, especially for parents. And that is the impact of the pandemic on women's workforce participation. So, , so many parents and particularly women and mothers have stayed home during the pandemic to care for kids.

[00:00:37] Been there taking care of the kids when there's volatility with daycare closures, school closures and also disproportionately work in jobs that were impacted by COVID shutdowns, where they have to stay home from work because their jobs were closed. So. Today on the podcast, I have Jocelyn Frye with us, and I'm really honestly honored that she's joining the [00:01:00] podcast.

[00:01:00] She is very impressive and very cool. She is the president of the national partnership for women and families. And this organization is one of the Titans in talking about equity in the workforce. Women's workforce participation, paid family, leave all of that. They. Move mountains in terms of lobbying and advocacy.

[00:01:23] And they're a hugely impressive organization with a hugely impressive woman at their helm who is going to talk on our podcast today. So we will be talking about why the pandemic has driven up unemployment among women disproportionately and especially. A disproportionate impact to women of color what the impact of the pandemic has been on women's workforce participation in terms of how, how it affects our economy overall, and the long-term implications for our economy.

[00:01:53] Also how it affects women's financial health and security in the short-term and longterm and their [00:02:00] careers. Long-term savings. Long-term wage growth, long-term retirement savings and their ability to reenter the workforce labor. I'm sorry. Later when the pandemic is eventually over and they can return.

[00:02:17] So basically the impact of, of leaving the workforce and what it means in the longterm for women's. Livelihoods. And then of course we are

going to talk about what we can do about this, , what would need to happen in order for women to return to the workforce in any significant numbers and how we can encourage our lawmakers to pass policies that would really help with this crisis.

[00:02:43] So I hope you enjoy the episode and as always a few quick asks before we get started. Number one, please subscribe to the podcast if you don't already .Number two, please leave a rating and review on apple podcasts so that more people can discover the [00:03:00] podcast. Those two steps go a long way towards making sure that people see the podcast and that these messages get out there.

[00:03:09] And number three, please follow Femtastic on instagram, Facebook and Twitter, and that's all for now. Please enjoy this episode with Jocelyn frye of the national partnership for women and families.

[00:03:25] Good morning, Jocelyn. I'm so excited to have you on the podcast. Well, thank you. Good morning. It is great to be here with you.

[00:03:33] So. Tell us a little bit about your very impressive background and your role at the national partnership for women.

[00:03:41] **Jocelyn Frye:** Well thank you for calling it impressive.

[00:03:43] **Katie Breen:** It is!

[00:03:44] **Jocelyn Frye:** I am the new president at the national partnership for women and families, and really excited to take on that role has started on December 1st.

[00:03:53] But , in many ways I feel like this is a role that I've had for A long time in [00:04:00] the sense that I have been connected to the partnership for many, many years. I am a native Washingtonian and you don't meet many of those, but I'm from Washington, from Washington, DC, born and raised.

[00:04:13] And eventually when I came back after law school, I worked at a law firm, but really wanted to do nonprofit. And found my way to the national partnership for women and families at that time, it was the women's legal defense fund. And I clearly enjoyed my experience cause I was there for 15

years until I went to the white house to be the first ladies policy director for Michelle Obama.

[00:04:39] A great opportunity. And then after that, I went to the center for American progress for about eight years until I returned to the partnership. So I have in many ways, , I left the partnership, but never really went. And now I'm back and excited to be here. And really excited about the work.[00:05:00]

[00:05:00] **Katie Breen:** Yeah. So for, for listeners who might not be familiar with the national partnership, can you tell us a little bit about what your focus is?

[00:05:08] **Jocelyn Frye:** Yeah, it's a great question. , we are actually celebrating our 50th anniversary and we are a women's rights organization that has always been focused on what are the strategies and mechanisms and policies we ought to be pursuing to improve women's lives. And 50 years ago, when the partnership started as the women's legal defense fund, it was squarely focused on, , identifying all of the different obstacles that limited the ability of women to participate fully in our society. Whether it was barriers to work legal barriers or just barriers in practice whether it's limits and access to healthcare or whatever that it was.

[00:05:50] We spent a lot of time focused on what are the legal mechanisms that we need to put in place to make sure that women have the same opportunities as. To, to live their [00:06:00] lives. And that core mission that started 15 years ago is fundamentally still the mission that we have. Just fast forward to 2021 new cast of characters, new context and lots of progress that has been made, but yet we recognize every day that there's so much work to do.

[00:06:17] And , the, the other thing I would say is that. We have spent a lot of time talking about the different types of policies that are important for women and how they connect together. And , one of the areas that we are really known for is around access to paid leave and access to supports that enable women to work and support their families.

[00:06:42] We wrote. And help to pass the family and medical leave act. And that had happened. President Clinton had signed it not long before I started at the partnership. And now almost 30 years later, not quite, but [00:07:00] almost we are now fighting for patients. And still fighting for, , the policies that help women navigate their lives.

[00:07:07] And that's what we do in partnership with other really terrific women's organizations and folks across the community, labor, civil rights. And , one of the things I think is clear now is that issues around navigating work and family. Care and the care agenda gets sort of fundamental to how we live.

[00:07:29] These are not just sort of nice issues for women. They are core issues for families. And so that's at the heart of the work that we do is focusing on how do we come up with these policies? How do we make sure that they are available for people and , fighting the fight to make sure that people have an equal and equitable opportunity to live the lives that they want to live.

[00:07:54] **Katie Breen:** Yes, so well said. So, I know that the national partnership works on a [00:08:00] lot of other issues, but I definitely know it best for the work around paid family leave. So Why I'm excited to talk to you today because obviously a lot has been going on in that realm with the pandemic. So I wanted to talk about , we know that the pandemic has driven up unemployment among women disproportionately and especially women of color.

[00:08:23] Can you explain why it is that the pandemic has driven up unemployment so much among women?

[00:08:29] **Jocelyn Frye:** Yeah. , it was really a perfect storm of a number of things. And I think what's most important for people to understand is that the pandemic really exacerbated problems that existed long before we ever heard about COVID 19.

[00:08:48] And part of the reason that the pandemic, what had such a pronounced effect, particularly on women, but truthfully across our society is because [00:09:00] of policy failures over years, that really failed to acknowledge the, the, the challenges facing families around navigating work family. Access to care and caregiving supports, support, procure workers and making sure that they're paid a livable wages.

[00:09:23] Like all of those issues were issues before the pandemic, the pandemic blew all of those up. It came in. We had to shut down and then people, whether they understood it or not, it became painfully obvious that we needed to be able to have the flexibility, to care for family, people who were sick. People who had sick family members, kids who are now home for school like that.

[00:09:51] Our failure to have policies that sort of allowed for the reality that people had caregiving needs became crystal clear. [00:10:00] The other dynamic is that in many families, and this has always been true. Women are the ones who provide care, coordinate care, make sure that caregiving happens. So when you have a care crisis, like the one created by the pandemic, it is going to disproportionately affect women.

[00:10:18] And that's exactly what happened. If you don't have. The ability to provide care. Somebody's got to provide care. You can't leave, , a 10 year old child at home. Somebody's gotta be there. And so the women did, they dropped out of work. They , figured out how they could make it work, even in situations that weren't workable.

[00:10:39] So you had an enormous number of women who dropped out of jobs because somebody had to provide care and there was no other way to. The other dynamic that happened is that many of the jobs most effected by the unemployment, when everything shut down, we're just proportionately service jobs , restaurants those [00:11:00] sorts of things.

[00:11:00] Those are jobs disproportionately held by women. They are lower paying jobs. So again, An unemployment job loss, dynamic that disproportionately affected women in truthfully women of color. That also the other piece that happened is that the folks who had to go to work, the essential workers. We're also disproportionately women, right?

[00:11:25] So the people who were least able to be flexible, who had to go in, who had to staff, our grocery stores and the pharmacies, and those were also disproportionately women and women of color. So you had this other group of women who were working, but often didn't have access to the supports that they needed.

[00:11:48] They didn't have. That's to extra benefits or things like paid leave. So all of those things came together in one moment and series of moments to create [00:12:00] enormous pressure on families. And that's part of the reason we saw the tremendous drop in employment for women. It's why you saw higher rates of employment for women of color.

[00:12:10] It's why you saw. Slowness in terms of women being able to go back because the caregiving needs are still real. Th the other thing I would say last thing I would say is that the pandemic also revealed the lack of really strong, high quality jobs. Particularly for women. So even in terms of going back, if

what women are going back to our jobs that still don't give them paid leave still doesn't allow them the flexibility to care for their families.

[00:12:46] It's going to be hard to go back to those shops, right? Because that's, that's the one thing that they know is that I can't continue to do that. Because that didn't work during the pandemic. So the other thing that you are [00:13:00] seeing is women now trying to going forward, figure out how are we gonna make this work?

[00:13:06] We're in the midst of, , hopefully the tail end of the pandemic. Didn't have care before, but we're going to need it now. What does that look like? All of those things impacted sort of women's employment had an out-sized effect on women of color in particular, and it continues to have that fact.

[00:13:27] **Katie Breen:** Yeah. Thank you. Thank you so much for that explanation. And yeah, I think it's helpful to have it broken down that way, because for a lot of people, it's like we see this happening among our friends and family and colleagues. But when you think about it happening at scale, it really is quite astounding just how many people are impacted by this and, and will continue to be like, Especially now, , with these new variants that, that do impact [00:14:00] children more, I feel like we probably will see more school closures, especially as Omicron becomes this giant wave. And it feels bleak and it's been, , such a long time at this point. I think people are really at their wits end and yeah. So I wanted to ask...

[00:14:21] **Jocelyn Frye:** It's frustrating. I mean, what I will say about that though is I think people are frustrated, but the thing that is important to remember is that there are solutions. It's not, we don't have to throw up our hands as if there's nothing we can do.

[00:14:36] There are solutions that can help us and we have to have the political will to do them.

[00:14:43] **Katie Breen:** Absolutely. So we'll, we'll get to those solutions in a little bit, because I definitely want to talk about them. But I wanted to ask, , beyond the human element that we're seeing it and sort of the individual stories, in the aggregate, , what has been the impact of this pandemic in [00:15:00] terms of how it affects the economy overall, because women are so disadvantaged in this.

[00:15:09] **Jocelyn Frye:** Yeah, that's an important part of the equation. Because I think people forget that women increasingly are critical to the economic stability of their families and they're critical to our economy. , in most families with kids, moms are breadwinners. And depending on , whether you're talking about families that are black.

[00:15:32] Versus Latino or white families, the percentage has changed a little bit. , black moms are most likely to be breadwinners sole or primary breadwinners in comparison to their other counterparts, but across the board mothers at least two thirds of mothers are sole or primary. or co-breadwinners in their family.

[00:15:53] So what that means is that anything that happens to them economically is a [00:16:00] consequence for a lot of families. At the same time, we also know that. Women are critical to just our economic growth. Overall, if you look historically over years of data things like our GDP and , just, , other measures of sort of overall economic strength have been higher and improved in part because women have entered into the workforce.

[00:16:24] So there are practical economic consequences when women leave. It's disruptive to families. It lowers the economics strength of families when women are not working. And it has an effect on our economy. So it's not just, , again, a nice thing to do. You'd want women working because it's their key up into the survivability of families, sustainability of families.

[00:16:50] And they're a key to the. Equation of how do we have sustained economic growth? So I think a macro understanding of the pandemic[00:17:00] is important.

[00:17:02] **Katie Breen:** Yeah. And then I also think a lot about, , the macro implications of the economy, the long-term macro implications to the economy of the pandemic, but also the long-term implications, both to women and to the economy of what it means to take a break from your career, because you are caring for children during the pandemic, what it means for your long-term earnings, your longterm ability to advance. And that also feels like a conversation that isn't happening necessarily as much as- thinking about what it means when basically a whole generation of women have a career setback because they're at home, even if they reenter.

[00:17:48] **Jocelyn Frye:** Right. And you're absolutely right. I mean, and we know this from the data in research that it's harder for women when they have a

lot of disruptions. They sort of fall [00:18:00] behind so to speak and it ultimately results in losses in terms of potential wages and earnings over the long haul.

[00:18:08] If you look at the data, generally speaking women, lose over \$400,000 over a lifetime, a career in terms of lost earnings because of time off and because of the wage gap and so forth. It's more it's closer to \$900,000 in terms of lost Earnings over the years because of wage disparities, for example for black women, it's closer to a million for Latinas.

[00:18:36] So we know sort of the combination of women sort of leaving work because they have care that, is one of the things that exacerbates. Pronounced wage disparities. It also exacerbates women sort of moving up the ladder, those. Practical consequences. Not only in the short-term in terms of, sort of the [00:19:00] pocket book issues and paying rent and childcare and groceries, but also longer in terms of just the ability of women to amass the resources, to be able to retire and things like that.

[00:19:13] So I think. You are right that people don't think about those consequences. But they're real. And they affect not only women's ability just to progress in the workforce themselves, but there are practical consequences for families.

[00:19:30] **Katie Breen:** Absolutely. Another thing that I've been thinking about is, , You're hearing in the media and in conversations and you see it when you walk down your local main street, that there's a staffing crisis.

[00:19:45] And, and the refrain that has really been frustrating to me is like, oh, people don't want to work. People don't want to go back to work. So what extent do you think that is? That narrative is discounting the reliance, that those [00:20:00] sectors, which are largely minimum wage jobs had on women who. I need to stay home and, and can't come back right now.

[00:20:08] **Jocelyn Frye:** Right. I think they are absolutely relying on an old narrative. , I think, , one of the things as you use the word frustrating, and that's the appropriate word is enormously frustrating. And quite frankly, infuriating that it, , in the midst of a pandemic that we keep hoping is about to be over.

[00:20:29] It never quite seems to be over. We keep trying to ignore the lessons of a pandemic. And one of the most important lessons of a pandemic is that we have failed miserably when it comes to the policies necessary to enable not only

women, but men and, and really all people to be able to go to work, be responsible workers, but also deal with the fact that they have to care for.

[00:20:57] And that narrative that sort of suggests [00:21:00] that people to still want to go back to work and, , we just need to tell them to cut up benefits and just get them back into the, to the, the job without modification. It's really just an effort to ignore sort of one of these, the most fundamental lessons from the pandemic.

[00:21:17] It isn't, it's an effort to really try to preserve and protect and shield the status quo that was fundamentally failing in its ability to address care. It is also a narrative that is designed to ignore. The need for concrete, meaningful investments in care, we have made a lot over the years on the backs of women and on the backs of women of color and not really paying them enough or paying them at all to basically do the vast majority of this caregiving work that must get.

[00:21:55] And so this narrative is really one that is [00:22:00] orchestrated and designed to ignore that fundamental lesson. Right. And so you are right. And to shame and to make this about failures and inadequacies on the part of women and, and, and low wage workers and any workers. And just to make this about them, as opposed to acknowledging the long standing systemic failures that have been in place that have been designed to basically Put in place, a low wage work force with this few supports as possible to do sort of an enormous amount of work that is essential work, right?

[00:22:38] And so I think that it is, is critical for us to consistently push back on this narrative and to remind people, , we have had live and in living color a lesson about the need for caregiving support during the. If we don't learn that lesson lesson, it's, , we have not been paying [00:23:00] attention and, and nobody should walk away from this pandemic, thinking that, going back to where we were is a good answer.

[00:23:10] It's part of the reason that it's been so hard. And so we have to learn, learn that lesson. We should have learned it already. And, and the problem of folks not going back to jobs is that those jobs ultimately didn't serve them. Right. Like the people who were in those jobs didn't have the protections that they need.

[00:23:31] They didn't have the leave they needed. They didn't have the ability to respond to the needs of their families. They didn't have the savings that they

needed to deal with. The fact that the jobs shut down, like all the things they needed during the pandemic, they did not get. And so the, one of the lessons here is that people need to go back to jobs that will actually serve them.

[00:23:52] Well, they need to pay them well, they need to be able to provide the support to the families they need. They need to be able to [00:24:00] care for their families. We need to do it different. And that has to be the enduring lesson of the pandemic. And if we keep ignoring that, then we're just setting ourselves up for failure.

[00:24:11] And I think the last thing I'd say about it is that the folks who want to ignore that and want to go back to where we were, , benefited enormously from that today. Absolutely. , they did it on the backs of women of color. And they did it, , perpetuating a narrative that always sort of suggests they don't want to work.

[00:24:32] **Katie Breen:** Right. It just feels like gaslighting. Oh, you don't want to work well, I have no ability to the, why would I, I can't work or what

[00:24:42] **Jocelyn Frye:** exactly, exactly. And , the thing I often use is the best example of that is for years, black women have had the highest labor force participation amongst all.

[00:24:54] But yet the narrative that you will often hear the stereotypes is that they don't want to work. [00:25:00] And it is, it is, it is. It speaks volumes about how we use these pernicious stereotypes to keep people in jobs that are not paying them. Well, not yet. And the work that they do and creating a narrative that perpetuates that problem.

[00:25:20] **Katie Breen:** Right. Right. And there's just such like deeply entrenched ropes. We were like, , like the racist welfare queen trope, where you're like, but black women have the highest workforce participation. What are you talking about?

[00:25:35] **Jocelyn Frye:** Right. Right. Well, I think it's. It's not by mistake, right? It's not by mistake.

[00:25:43] And so, , it's, it's incumbent upon us to not simply push back on it, to call it what it is and, and to make clear that going back to a system. Where women [00:26:00] broadly, women of color in particular are consistently

devalued and put in jobs where they have limited. Access to the protections that they need to care for their own family, the narrative around.

[00:26:16] We want them to do the stuff for us. Right. But we want them to be our essential workers that we want them to go out and make sure that we can get everything we need, but we don't have to pay it all attention to whether or not they get what they need. We have to be really clear that that hypocrisy ought not to be memorialized in policy.

[00:26:34] Yes. We are going to do something about making sure that we never have to experience this again. Then we actually have to be really intentional about the policies we need to make sure that the jobs that people hold are actually quality jobs that pay the wages that they need and we'll offer the supports they need so that they can have the dignity of caring for their families.

[00:26:57] The way that we want to care for our ours.[00:27:00]

[00:27:02] **Katie Breen:** So let's talk about solutions now, because like you said, these are not intractable problems. Many other countries have figured this out, so yes. Tell us about, , what policy levers do we have to pull to, to solve this crisis?

[00:27:18] **Jocelyn Frye:** Yeah, you there are many , th the, the clearest one and the one that is, , most implicated by about by the care crisis is simply we need to invest in care.

[00:27:28] We need to make sure that people have the ability to take time off if they need to care for themselves or their families. We need to make sure that they can do so without breaking the bank. And so that they can access affordable care. We need to make sure that care workers themselves are paid decent wages so that they can care for them, their families.

[00:27:48] So there are a set of things that have to do with just enabling folks to access period. Yeah. , navigate, manage the care and their families and, and to ensure the care workers themselves [00:28:00] are treated properly. So it's, , increasing the wages of care workers, access to paid family and medical leave so that people can take off time for a host of different caregiving reasons, affordable childcare.

[00:28:13] So that folks who have children can ensure that their kids are , high-quality settings when parents are working, like all of those investments

around sort of care and ensuring folks can access care are critical in addition we need to make sure that women with. Going to work actually are treated fairly in the workplace that, , we need to do things to improve their wages.

[00:28:37] Whether it's raising the minimum wage, women are disproportionately minimum wage workers, but truthfully women across the board are underpaid women of color more. So and so there's a lot that we can do to just improve women's wage here. It minimized pay discrimination and distress and their economic posture in the workplace.

[00:28:58] So there, those types of [00:29:00] interventions all of those things are critical to do. And the other thing I would say is that the folks who need care at home , there's a whole set of interventions around home care and just the ability to have access to. To sort of affordable high-quality care services at home.

[00:29:18] , those are important. , the there's a long list of, of benefits and supports that we can come up with to ensure that families can navigate their caregiving needs without sacrificing their economic standing. So that that's, I think where we start. Yes, that sounds like a good start.

[00:29:39] **Katie Breen:** Are there bills that have already been introduced that would focus on these things, like, are there things that are already moving through Congress right now?

[00:29:49] **Jocelyn Frye:** Absolutely. , I, and I, I would think about it in a couple of different ways. So, , obviously there's package of reconciliation package that is moving [00:30:00] through Congress that the precedent initially put forward that would do many of these things , as sort of a boost to the economy in the wake of the pandemic that, , it's referred to the build back better package, and it has many of these components, investments and childcare the, the house package and now the Senate package has, , paid family leave a small paid family leave program there's investments for home and community-based services.

[00:30:28] , it really tries to capture all of these policies in one place and send the message that these types of caregiving investments are really critical to really getting us back to where we need to be. Not in, not where we were. And need to be to address these problems now, but lessen the likelihood in the future.

[00:30:49] So there's that package. But even before bill back better, there were certainly legislative measures that, , are still there that could address some of these issues.[00:31:00] The family act would create a comprehensive paid family medical leave program. The paycheck fairness act would strengthen pay disclosure laws against pay discrimination and help boost wages raise the wage act would raise the minimum wage.

[00:31:14] , there was a childcare, a couple of childcare bills that would lower costs and to ensure that families don't have to spend, I think it's up to no more than 7% of the. The overall income on childcare and help boost wages for childcare workers and create sort of high-quality care settings.

[00:31:33] So there were all these bills and they, , they continue to be there and they are important policy ideas that would improve the way of the land. The bill back better package. Fortunately has many. Provisions in it and would be a transformative step forward. And we should put , all of our support behind them because we're behind.

[00:31:54] And the people who are bearing the brunt of this are, , our families who have to pick up these [00:32:00] costs in the absence of, , policies that could be could be. Hmm.

[00:32:06] **Katie Breen:** Yeah. Well, and so today is December 17th 2021. I don't know exactly when , when listeners will be hearing this podcast, but right now build back better, has been passed in the house and is now in the hands of the Senate. So call your senators and tell them to support this. I also feel like I want to just mentioned to listeners, , we for good reasons have so much focus on federal movement on these issues, but they're absolutely things that can happen at the state and local level, like things like minimum wage, paid leave. So I definitely don't want people to get the impression it's all in the hands of Congress, your local legislators absolutely can do this stuff. So don't discount that don't discount. I talk a lot about [00:33:00] not discounting local elections, state elections where there's way lower voter turnout, but there's so much power concentrated in those , legislative bodies

[00:33:11] so wanting to encourage people to contact your senators for sure, because it will be sweeping, , whenit is at the federal level level, but do not forget that your state and local representatives also could be doing more.

[00:33:27] **Jocelyn Frye:** You are so right. And in many instances, our ability to move change, the federal level is. Directly connected to the, the change that is

happening at the state level. , the push for paid leave has been helped enormously by the fact that there are states that have paid leave programs and they have been important incubators for what success looks like, and they can help to push back on

[00:33:57] **Katie Breen:** and show data.

[00:33:59] **Jocelyn Frye:** [00:34:00] Exactly. Exactly. And that's been, that's been really critical, a lot of the criticism and the, the assessment of what will happen whenever you make a change. And you can look at California, you can look at Rhode Island, you can look at New Jersey. You can look at these states that have taken an important critical step forward and say that didn't happen; precisely the opposite.

[00:34:23] There wasn't job loss. In fact, it helped with productivity it's strengthens access to caregiving for men. You have more men, more likely to take leave to support their families, right? Like there are things that these laws have been able to. To help show the state's really play a critical role.

[00:34:44] **Katie Breen:** Yeah, that is such a good point. I didn't think of that, but it totally makes sense. Like if, if people are opposing these bills and saying, oh, well this will happen. Or we don't know what will be the impact you can say, well, look at this data, this is what actually happened.

[00:34:58] **Jocelyn Frye:** Right, right. [00:35:00] And that's exactly what.

[00:35:00] And , now we are in a place where some states have had programs in place for four years that you can really see, , this this negative thing didn't happen, but here's all the positive that did happen. And, and think about, just think how much better off we'd be if this was, , not exclusive to one or two or four or five states, but really a national policy across the.

[00:35:26] **Katie Breen:** Yeah, absolutely. Well to, to close on a positive and motivating note if you could sort of provide a call to action for people listening today, what would you tell them to do?

[00:35:40] **Jocelyn Frye:** I would say to anybody listening that it's important for members of Congress to hear stories about their lives and what people are experiencing in their lives, , on the ground.

[00:35:56] There is a lot of discussion in Congress about [00:36:00] what works and what doesn't. Everybody says they are for working families. Everybody says they're for women. But yet there's an enormous disconnect between what will really help people and what gets discussed in Congress. And, many of the issues that we've talked about paid leave, equal pay.

[00:36:21] There is enormous public support. It is across race and ethnicity. It is true across political affiliation. Paid leave is not a partisan issue outside of Washington, Republicans support paid leave, Democrats support, paid leave. So I think it's important for people to tell their story and to make sure that their members of Congress know that these are not sort of made up ideas or problems, that it matters enormously. If they take the time to pass policies, to ensure that no one ever has to go [00:37:00] through the type of pandemic that we've gone through without the supports that we should've had to ensure that we didn't experience economic distress and that our families continue to survive and thrive. Members of Congress respond to their constituents in that regard, , they can't look at the people who elected them and say your stories don't matter. And so it's important for folks to say my story actually does matter as policy that you've been ignoring actually is critical to my ability to make sure that my family has, , food on the table can pay rent, can pay gas, to put in their car, like all these things, and we expect more.

[00:37:43] And I think it's important for people to do that. Accountability with numbers all the time. People are good at asking for their votes. Particularly women's votes. Women have driven most of the elections in recent memory and have not gotten what they needed. And, and I think [00:38:00] it's critical for, , women in particular women of color to say, , quite frankly, we expected and we expect you to hear me, hear us. And we expect policies from Washington that actually address our problems. I think, it's critical for folks to do.

[00:38:20] **Katie Breen:** Awesome. Yes. Thank you. Well, Jocelyn, truly I'm, I'm honored to have you on the podcast and really appreciate this conversation. Really appreciate all of the work that you do. Yes. Thank you so much for being here.

[00:38:36] **Jocelyn Frye:** Well, thank you for having me. This has been great. And I, I appreciate your making space for these issues on this platform. And with your listeners, it's so critical and important and it's been a pleasure.

[00:38:50] Thank you

[00:38:51] **Katie Breen:** for listening to another episode of Femtastic.

[00:38:54] As always in the show notes for this episode, I will link a lot
[00:39:00] of resources, articles, further information about a lot of the topics we talked about today. So whether it's the statistics Jocelyn mentioned about workforce participation or the narrative of oh people just don't want to work. And more information about sort of why that is an inaccurate narrative. I will post some links in the episode notes. You can learn more about those topics and share them. Also I will of course, link to the national partnership's website. And if you would like to contact your representatives, which I think you should, and especially for build back better, your senators, if you don't know how to do that I promise you. It's really not as intimidating as it sounds. You can literally just Google who is my Senator. And you'll be able to pull that up pretty quickly. They'll have office phone numbers. , sometimes email addresses, honestly, the very best way is to call them. I know a lot of people don't like [00:40:00] talking on the phone these days, but I promise you it's not bad.

[00:40:02] What will happen is either you'll get a voicemail and you can leave a voicemail or you will get a staffer and you say, "hi, my name is Katie Breen. I live in boulder, Colorado. I am a constituent of the Senator and I am calling because I would like for the Senator to support the build back better act.

[00:40:24] And in particular, I really care about children and families and women's ability to be in the workforce. And this is why I'm supporting this bill. And these are the things that I want to change because I'm really passionate about workforce participation." So basically what will happen is the Senator's staff will, then they basically keep a tally of constituents who have called about particular issues.

[00:40:51] So you don't really even need to have like a big spiel or a big speech. You can literally just say, I'm calling to ask the Senator to support p aid family leave provisions in the build back better [00:41:00] act, or just in general, the paid family leave provisions. And their staff essentially like tallies what voters have called about.

[00:41:09] So do not worry about sounding stupid or is thatsoundinglike, you don't know what you're talking about. Like, honestly you can keep it as short as possible because they're just going to tally it anyway. It's not going to be like the more information you give about why you care about this. It is definitely good for them to have stories if you can talk about your personal experience and why this matters to you personally, but if you don't feel like you have like some big

story to tell that's okay too, like get in, get out, they'll tally. So it's really easy. I know it sounds intimidating, but literally their staffers are like 23 year olds are tallying calls. So don't be intimidated. And no shade to 20 three-year-old staffers or staffers who are older than 23. I think they're all amazing, but I'm just trying to make the point that, like, it's not like it's a direct line to your Senator where you need to be intimidated. So there's that, of course you can also send tweets, , social media, emails, [00:42:00] but the calls are really the most effective way.

[00:42:02] So do that and that's all. Thanks for listening. And I hope you enjoy this episode. And if you did, please subscribe to the podcast. Please share it with a friend. And if you want extra credit, leave a rating and review on apple podcasts so that more people can find it. Okay. Thanks so much.