

Dear Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin,

[Governor Tony Evers has proposed 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave as a part of the 2023-2025 biennial state budget.](#)

**We, the UW-Madison workers' labor unions, are writing this letter to urge you to commit to including 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for faculty, graduate students, and university staff in the UW Madison budget for next year, regardless of whether this provision in Governor Evers' budget is included in the final version of the budget.**

Currently, Teaching Assistants (TAs), Project Assistants (PAs) and Research Assistants (RAs) **do not** have the right to paid or unpaid leave under the Federal Family Leave and Medical Act (FMLA) or the State Wisconsin Family Leave and Medical Act (WFMLA).<sup>1</sup> Graduate students are allowed up to 6 days of paid sick leave, but must take **leave without pay** for the remaining duration of an appointment after the birth of a child. Most graduate students cannot afford such a leave and return to work almost immediately, because *if they did take an unpaid leave, they would lose their tuition remission, their stipend, and their health insurance.*

As of right now, grad student workers who need more than 6 days off due to the birth of a child are at the mercy of their professors or advisors. Graduate students who need additional time off due to the birth of a child typically ask colleagues to cover their work (teaching, on their project or in the lab). These graduate student colleagues who cover the work of a grad parent are not compensated by the university for the overtime work they are providing. **Graduate student parents deserve to be able to take time off without worrying about whether their benefits, stipend, or tuition remission will be affected.**

Similarly, **there is no consistent paid family leave policy for faculty, academic staff, and university staff.** As [faculty senate resolution 3078](#) and [academic staff resolution 809](#) note, the lack of a consistent policy exacerbates existing economic inequalities. The [Family Leave Report and Recommendations](#) generated by the Working Group on Paid Family Leave further notes that the majority of our peer institutions in the Association of American Universities Data Exchange have already implemented paid family leave policies.

**We strongly urge you to amend university policy to include 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for all graduate students, faculty, academic staff, and university staff.**

Sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> Teaching Assistants, Project Assistants and Research Assistants work 33.3%-50% positions (13.3-20 hours/week), in addition to being full-time students. Thus, because graduate student workers do not work 1,000 hours during a 52 consecutive-week employment with the University (required for WFMLA), or 1,250 hours during 12 non-consecutive months of employment with the University (required for FMLA), they do not have the rights given by these Acts.

Your campus unions:

TAA (Teaching Assistant's Association), AFT Local 3220  
Wisconsin University Union (WUU) Executive Committee  
UFAS (United Faculty & Academic Staff), AFT Local 223  
AFSCME Local 2412  
University Labor Council

Individual Signatures:

Joel Ballivian  
Valerie Johnson  
Nikola Milicic  
Amelia Hansen  
Jane Ellmann  
Eleanor Patterson  
Aurora Shimshak  
Francesco Liucci  
Alessandra A Silva  
Varsha Pai  
Tracy De Grandis  
Robert mejia  
Luca Riitano  
Maria Tsoy  
Jessie Thwaites  
Kasia Wiech  
Boyana Martinova  
Liam Hurley  
Patricia Sayuri Zito  
Jenna Greene  
Jonathan M Gallimore  
Miriam Marino  
Erin Pierce  
Elaine Cannell  
Dinesh Kumar Kuppa Baskaran  
Bianca Rollings  
Andrey Yao  
Bonnie Willison  
Taylor Dickson  
Anastasia Kirilyuk

Judith Harackiewicz  
Evangeline Thurston Wilder  
Katie Mummah  
Aurod Ounsinegad  
Gabriel Smith  
Ethan Hartman  
Finn Shepherd  
Laura Horton  
Sharayah Preman  
Jevin Lortie  
Jenny Saffran  
Dina Nina Martinez Rutherford  
Jenna Mertz  
Ethan Schondorf  
Tomas Schlenker  
Mark Millard  
Patricia Fisher  
Mary McCoy  
Cort Vande Walle  
Renata Camila de Toledo  
Kaylee Stevenson  
Ben Harpt  
Alexandria Thao  
Sophia Winkler-schor  
Mihir Mehendale  
Leah Sandner  
Brianna Buhr  
Nicki Day-Lucore  
Morgan Jerald  
Carolina Mendoza Cavazos  
William Beimers  
Marie koch  
Aysiah Jaeke  
Gabrielle Cornish  
Caroline Haynie  
Emily Keepman  
Gail Hettrick  
John Tobin  
Nitya Gupta  
Grace Atkins

Elizabeth Romanovska  
Miral Abdalaziz  
Silas Miller  
Rheeya Uppaal  
Gokcan Tatli  
LUKAS JON HENJUM  
Angela Olvera  
James Tautges  
Laura Stoesz  
Sophia Chleborad  
Luis Vazquez  
Miranda Alksnis  
Spencer Windorski  
Christopher Endemann  
Gabo Ochoa Samoff  
Robert Mejia  
Kirin McCrory  
Catalina Valdez  
Susan Wanta  
Kim Gutierrez  
Mazharul Islam  
Katie Barnes  
Marie Stolzenburg  
Lynne Cotter  
Savannah Carr  
Julio de Alencastro Graca Mereb  
Logan Breitzmann  
Jack Hynick  
Kadee N Lawrence  
Catherine Marler  
Dominique Villasenor  
Amber Palson  
Daniel Levitin  
Dan Fitch  
Delaney Steffen  
John Anderson  
Marian Azeem-Angel  
Priscilla Contreras  
Ayesha Khan  
FNU Aakash

amadi ozier  
Garrett Fullerton  
Brian K. Larson  
Alexandra Walters  
Lora Schmo-Daan  
Alexandre Espreafico Guelerman Ramos  
Yikai Wang  
Barret Elward  
Carly Lucas  
Jennifer Trinh  
Dahlia Saba  
Clark Zimmerman  
Hannah Woodward  
Emily Bouza  
Ryan Miller  
Yadira Medina Guevara  
Will Hardt  
Ayse Okur  
Aevi van der Stok  
Katie Cataldo  
Kiley Specht  
Nick Kaska  
Angel Banuelos  
Rachel L McClure  
Gary Lupyan  
Mustafa Quadir  
Kallan Benjamin  
Madison Youngblom  
John Dawson  
Sarah Ensor  
Nick Buttrick  
Jay Lowe  
Matt Schwennesen  
Michaela Trautman  
Thomas Niepsuj  
Dylan Best  
Nicole Margenau  
Amanda Molder  
Xiangpeng Hao  
Joshua Brazee

Karen Schloss  
Lisa Vang  
Cecile Ane  
Nina Denne  
Paula Gottlieb  
Abigail Bishop  
Kathryn Jackson  
Bennett McIntosh  
Theresa Schwaar  
Iris Zhao  
Huzaifa Mustafa Unjhawala  
Enrique Larrea  
Carla Oppenheimer  
Sarah Waldfogel  
Ryan Albosta  
Marina Drake  
Alex Hof  
Amihan Huesmann  
Kevin Gundlach  
Xitlalic Castañeda-Cerda  
Meghana Kalluri  
Jean Laurenz  
Mats Johansson  
Bailey Marshall  
ML Krase  
Michal Engelman  
Harald Kliems  
Taylor Bailey  
Anna Ardito  
Amanda Walsh  
Gabriela Munoz Sanchez  
Lyric Simonian-Holiday  
Peter Haney  
Keely Mruk  
Katherine Bultman  
Alexus Moore  
Matthew Borman  
Brynn Vanboxtel  
Ellie Dukes  
Lauren King

Beth Harper  
Robin Morgenstern  
Marcus Cederstrom  
Benjamin Harpt  
Jacob Wologo  
Colin Gillis  
Isabel Cannell  
Jiangjiang Wu  
Serena Xu  
Francesca Hong  
Joe Walrath  
S M Jaglul Hasan  
Jessica Iverson  
Hailun Zhang  
Carrie Welsh  
Allison G Kaplan  
Jack Garton  
Nicki Vandermeakn  
Greta Harris  
Jason Saba  
Brock Barber  
Naman Gupta  
Hannah Olson-Williams  
Dominic Chomchai  
Auld Kinder  
Kaleb S  
Gregg Sanford  
Adreanna Dietrich  
Hong Ming Lim  
Nick Scheel  
Sarah Meier  
Abhi  
Souvik Roy  
Ananya Deepak  
Sharad Chandarana  
Christopher Stevens  
Anna Meyer  
Jesse Rathgeber  
Santosh Kumar  
Mikayla Kaeppler

Lindsay Platt  
Liz Nouel  
Warren Enström  
Miranda Gorsuch  
John Shadle  
Abhijnya Menakur  
Talita Silva  
David Rivera-Kohr  
Lauren Clark  
Marisol Dashnaw  
Dane Smith  
Ilhan Bok  
Shreya Singh  
Amy Irving  
Henry Brown  
Jeff Johnson  
Sam Gustafson  
Jeremiah Riendeau  
Jordan Radke  
Timothy Thomas Rogers  
Rocio Espresati  
Bryan Pfeifer  
Sophia Tietjen  
Valerie Ahl  
Elizabeth Hankins  
Emily Wessel  
Emma Svenson  
Jeffrey Henriques  
Sami Schalk  
Summer Al Hamdari  
Darby Yocum  
Langston Jones  
Aisha Mohamed  
Magna Mohapatra  
Summer Al Hamdani  
Mckenzie Lowe  
Ella Smith  
Parthy Schachter  
Paulina Wüstefeld  
Aidan Dickinson



Curtis Feldner  
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Drew Amelia Thibodeaux  
Alder Marsha Rummel  
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Pierce Nienhaus  
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Hilary Hunt  
Alex Mine  
Brent Mode  
Leah Entenmann  
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Gabriel Kahan  
Luciana Heineman  
Chloe Kepler  
Carsten Haas  
Stephen Ferrigno  
Katie Tyranski  
Obie Oniah  
Trang Hoang  
Leslie Bow  
Chutikarn Chitboonthavisuk  
Carlos Recarte  
Zachary Jerzyk

John Clark  
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Declan Kelly  
Emily Eix  
William Sun  
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Barb Peters  
Casey Ford  
Michael Childers  
Spencer Suhing  
Julio Mereb  
Madeline Smerchansky  
George Whitney  
Lauren Peterson  
Jennica Li  
Dieyckson Osvani Freire  
Y. Ivette Colón  
Emily Schkeryantz  
Ummay Mahfuza Shapla  
Yogesh Chawla  
Marienela Heredia  
Adria Kriehn  
Ashley Berghoff  
Zoé Evelyn  
Nikki Albosta  
Cody Dobson  
Robin Chisholm  
Owen Sullivan  
Ryan McLane  
Liz Anna Kozik  
Kevin Meagher  
Pete Schwieger  
Patrick Smith  
Crista Lebens  
Bengisu Cagiltay  
Dana Maltby

Laura Bettenhausen  
Molly C. Mulcahy PhD RD  
Curtis O'Dwyer  
Haley Kottler  
Daniel Pearce  
Cameron Towne  
Nitzan Orr  
Francesca Bua  
Christina Jurotich  
Aidan Howells  
Ellen Albright  
Guy Kunzmann  
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Lauren English  
Anthony Hua  
Melissa Reusche  
Alice Ogden-Nussbaum  
Kristy Wendt  
Qilin Li  
Jessica Ryan  
Justin Marquez  
Warrick Moses  
Caitlin Warlick-Short  
LB Klein  
Sophia Nowak  
Jassim Al-Oboudi  
Leela Shah  
Cheta Siletti  
James Santulli  
Theodore Pena  
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Peyton Lalain  
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Rachel Rovinsky  
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Veronica Chen  
Anjo Brekalo  
Sara Chadwick  
Lacey Brooks

Anupreksha Jain  
Jessica Stovall  
Courtney Berner  
Colin Hemme  
Roxy Etta  
Miranda Rintool  
Simon Harty  
Rachel Banda  
ken hahn  
Gwen Liston  
Karl Broman  
Ashley Hintermeyer  
Aniket Rege  
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Sophie Mancha  
Seth Weld  
Robert Ladwig  
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Ruthanna Hutton  
Rodrigo Montoro  
Giulia Schimmenti  
Maureen McCormack  
Zachary Curtis-Ginsberg  
Lance Li  
Giuliana Chamedes  
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Cruz Romero Morales  
Maya Banks  
Flynn Dustrad

Caleb Baird  
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Margaret Earley  
Jacob Wood  
Margaret Riordan  
Anna Tommasi  
Hannah Paley  
Susan Flores  
Angad Dhariwal  
Jean-Michel Ane  
Aviva Englander  
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Kelsey Foster  
Andrew Jason Turner  
Lisa Marvel Johnson  
Rachel Minne  
Rebecca Schmidt  
Di "Silas" Kuang  
Umberto Stefanini  
Nicole West  
Alexys Lobo  
Katie Ryan  
Michael Y Bennett  
Phoebe Leung  
Robert Christl  
Daniel Zdowu  
Amy Enright  
Mary Anderson  
Natalie Suri  
Hannah Koller  
Abby Armstrong Check  
Sadie Larson

Hayley Johnson  
Molly Nelson  
Helaina Von Bank  
Adena Rissman  
Haoran Xiong  
Lauri Luosta  
Kaycee Rigersy  
Case Morton-Lill  
Emily M. Reynolds  
Brendan Sullivan  
Lara Gerassi  
Yuxin Wei  
Paulo Fernandes  
Al Michels  
Elizabeth White  
Morgan Adams  
Uju Joy Okaa  
Seth Anderson  
Eric Haag  
Iris Ohara  
Stephanie Van Pay  
Nolan Anderson  
Nicole Spear  
Martin Diger  
Burcu Alptekin  
Isaac Schwarz  
Teddy Peña  
Richard Antaramian (BA '05), Associate Professor of History at USC  
Rebecca Sawyer  
Jenny Braunginn  
Mary Hannah Swaney  
Madeline Topf  
Markia Silverman-Rodriguez  
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Danica Gressel  
Albert Fie  
Man Chen  
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Alexander Peseckis  
Arnav Sinha  
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Ruth Thomas  
Yuhao Zhang  
India Viola  
Lauren Lucas  
Aubrey Houser  
Aidan Riehl  
Jeremiah Cahill  
Fiona Weeks  
keegan mccluskey  
Kevin B Christensen  
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Bobby Liu  
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Michael O'Connor  
Isaac Ruben  
Jyotsna Dhar  
Rachel Fenske  
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Tahoe Fiala  
Ravi Yada  
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Hunter Blalock  
Afang Rizayeva  
Gera Badley  
Nick Bumgardner  
Patrick Nolan  
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Jason Bates

Darby Peter  
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Quinn Henneger  
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Flynn Dustrud  
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Sameera Ibrahim  
Joseph Lynch  
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Adithya Pugazhendhi  
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Salsabil Arabi  
Gustavo Flores  
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Rodlyn-mae Banting



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JT Cestkowski  
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Elise Kerns  
McKay Jones  
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Blaise Thompson  
Areyana Proctor  
Kristin Armstrong  
Jesse Osborn  
Al'x Pierre  
Pragya Mittal  
Callie Rosenberg  
Hana Schwonek  
Janaina Saad  
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Samuel Saghafi  
Adrian Calderon  
Rauf Salamzade  
Nathan Schilling  
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Ivan Aidun  
Deborah Chasman  
Clairine Larsen  
Carl Wepking  
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Alex Dobrila  
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Leo Randle  
Angela Ablaberdieva

Derek Weisberg  
Hazel Woodward  
Caitlin Dutta  
Adrian George  
Azka Ahmed  
Julia Greenberg  
dorothy Isoto  
Robert Hawkins  
Jessie Petrey  
Gavin Redding  
Mohan Richter-Addo  
Amy Liu  
Julia M Perroni  
August Brereton  
Ari Davidovsky  
Emily Hansen  
Marissa Gavioli  
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Anna Finley  
Raquel Kennon  
Sam Baumohl  
Jenna L Webb  
Quinn Kinzer  
Johnny Lorge  
Lori Spengler  
Jenna Wendricks  
Alex G. Seidenstricker  
Mike S. Goodman  
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Maddie Divane  
Rachyl Hietpas  
Cheyanne Koran  
Mark Heggen  
Jamie Jones  
Kendra Ebke  
Stephen McKay  
Soleil Young  
Jessica Magri

Ryan Hellenbrand  
Namita Khajanchi  
Chelsea Andrews  
Jennifer Allmaras  
Betty Grotophorst  
Sarah Congdon  
Caleb Robinson  
Johanna Wienholts  
Hannah Erpenbeck  
Yandi Wu  
Travis Austin  
Felix Bunke  
Anna Orfanou  
Eric Robson  
Caitlin McLimans  
Fiona H Weeks  
Fátima Sancheznieto  
Aishwarya Veerabahu  
Payton Breitzmann  
Gregory Geboski  
Laurel Noack  
Ashley Trudeau  
Caroline Hensley  
Paula M. Niedenthal  
Alexia Sabor  
Elizabeth Oleary  
Katie Osterbauer  
Siyuan Hu  
Martina Rogers  
Natalia Rosario Meléndez  
Angela  
Kristin Font  
Chloe Rosenstock  
Jacob Janssen  
Julia Tanenbaum  
Benjamin Dorava  
Phillip Harris  
Emma Schaefer  
Tiffany Thayer  
Grace Cassidy

Alison Mikulyuk