

Paid Leave for the U.S. (PL+US) Commends High-Quality Paid Leave Recommendations in Biden Jobs Plan, Biden-Sanders Unity Platform

This week, the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force released formal recommendations for the Democratic Party Platform, which included prioritizing high quality paid family and medical leave to support working families. This spring, [Paid Leave for the U.S. \(PL+US\)](#) Founder and Executive Director Katie Bethell advised the task force on the key elements of a high-quality paid leave policy for working families. PL+US supports a paid leave policy that provides time away from work to welcome a new child, care for a family member, or deal with a medical crisis along with job protections and sufficient wage replacement.

PL+US Legislative Director Whitney Pesek said, “The Biden-Sanders task force recommendations include a strong endorsement of comprehensive paid leave for all working people that would transform the lives of millions of families. The urgent need to prioritize a permanent paid leave policy has never been more clear as we confront a dire pandemic and economic recession that has left millions of families reeling from acute health, caregiving, and financial challenges. We urge candidates and lawmakers of both parties to seize the bipartisan momentum for paid leave to provide economic security to families and businesses, protect public health, and support our nation’s economic recovery.”

The task force wrote in its recommendations:

“The United States is alone among advanced economies in guaranteeing neither paid sick leave nor paid family leave for all workers. This puts excessive burdens on working families, and especially working mothers, even in the best of times, and is catastrophic for public health in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic...”

“Democrats will implement a high-quality paid family leave system that protects workers from the unfair choice between attending to urgent health or caretaking needs and earning a paycheck. We will fight to ensure all employers provide at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for all workers and family units, to enable new parents to recover from childbirth and bond with their newborns or adopted children and allow all workers to take extended time off to care for themselves or an ailing relative.”

Key Background on Paid Leave in the U.S.

- Paid Leave for the U.S. (PL+US) is the national campaign to win paid family and medical leave for everybody in the US. Founded by Katie Bethell, who Fortune Magazine named one of the world’s greatest leaders, PL+US has won or expanded access to paid leave for nearly 8 million working people in the US, in partnership with employers big and small, investors, and employees.
- The US is the *only* industrialized nation that has no federal paid family leave policy.
- A staggering **113 million workers** in America don’t have access to a *single day* of family and medical leave.

- The cost and responsibility of supporting families falls disproportionately on those who can least afford it: women, people of color, and low-wage working people.
- Racial disparities in access to job benefits like paid leave have accounted for 20 percent of the widening of the racial wealth gap since the 1980s.
- Black working people are twice as likely, compared to white working people, to report they needed to take family or medical leave but could not.
- Today in the US, **1 in 4 mothers** are forced to return to work less than two weeks after giving birth.
- **70 percent** of working caregivers are forced into serious financial hardship due to their dual roles.
- The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows *some* workers to take 12 weeks of *unpaid* leave in *some* jobs, but most people can't afford to be unpaid. Moreover, the **FMLA doesn't cover 40 percent of workers** in today's gig economy.
- There are road-tested, affordable solutions for providing high-quality paid family and medical leave that actually benefit the private sector: **Eight states and D.C.** have already created a system where everyone pays in a little, and the financial support is there when employers and individuals need it -- just like social security or unemployment insurance.
- More than **8 in 10 Americans support** creating a national paid family and medical leave policy.