The vast majority of working people in the United States do not have paid family leave through their jobs, including about 79 percent of working people — about 2,343,000 workers — in Maryland. Even unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act is inaccessible for 56 percent of Marylanders. The lack of paid leave has devastating costs for Marylanders and their families, public health and the economy.

Impossible choices between work and family are hurting Maryland’s economy, and women suffer most. Paid leave means people — especially women — aren’t forced to leave the labor force to care for their families or health, reducing turnover for employers of all sizes and boosting the economy.

If women in Maryland participated in the labor force at the same rate as women in countries with paid leave, there would be more than 47,000 additional workers in the state and $2.5 billion more in wages earned statewide.

Nationally, if women participated in the U.S. labor force at that rate, our economy would benefit from more than $650 billion in additional economic activity each year.

Paid leave improves employee retention, morale and productivity, strengthening bottom lines — but small employers often cannot provide the benefit — and universal paid leave would help them do that.

The pandemic has left Marylanders struggling with their health, finances and the ability to work. Paid leave means being able to cope with work and bills during a health crisis.

More than 958,000 Marylanders have contracted COVID-19, with older adults and people of color especially affected. Up to one in four will experience “long-haul COVID” symptoms including difficulty breathing, headache, dizziness, chest pain or fatigue that may require care from a loved one or interfere with work.

In Maryland, a typical worker who takes four weeks of unpaid leave loses more than $3,700 in income.

Since 2020, Maryland workers sick with COVID-19 have lost an estimated $536.8 million in wages due to lack of or inadequate paid leave.

In January 2022, nearly 253,600 Marylanders were not working because they were sick with or caring for someone with COVID-19, and more than 87,300 due to another illness or disability.
Marylanders are caught between their work and family responsibilities. **Paid leave means not having to choose between job and family.**

- About 68,500 children are born in Maryland each year, and in 77 percent of all Maryland households with children — more than 970,000 homes — all parents report to work.\(^{10}\)
- Women’s wages support their households. In Maryland, 76 percent of Black mothers, 48 percent of white mothers, 45 percent of Latina mothers and 47 of AAPI mothers are key family breadwinners. \(^{11}\)
- Women make up half of Maryland’s labor force (50 percent) and one-third of its business owners (33 percent).\(^{12}\)
- Across the country, many men want to play a larger role in caring for their children, but unsupportive policies and stigma hold them back.\(^{13}\)

**Maryland families will face increased family and medical care needs. **Paid leave means older adults and working people of all ages can get the support they need to receive and provide critical care.

- More than one in four workers are 55 and older.\(^{14}\)
- In the next 20 years, the share of the state’s population age 65 and older will grow by more than ten percent.\(^{15}\)
- Older workers are more likely to experience serious medical conditions that require care.\(^{16}\)
- A paid leave program could add about 139,300 family caregivers to Maryland’s workforce by 2030.\(^{17}\)

**Marylanders need a common sense paid leave program.** We recommend one that:

- Includes all workers, no matter where they live or work or what kind of job they have;
- Replaces enough income that workers at any income level can afford leave;
- Provides enough time for workers to meet their care and health needs;
- Covers the range of major needs workers face, including to address their own health conditions, to care for seriously ill, injured or disabled family members and to welcome newborn, newly adopted or foster children; and
- Has a sustainable funding source that is affordable for workers, employers and the government without harming other essential programs.

**Maryland paid family and medical leave means a stronger economy, healthier families and businesses, and greater equality for all women and families.**

To learn more, visit NationalPartnership.org/PaidLeave.
Can mothers are key breadwinners; 60 percent of mothers identifying as multiracial or 20
ack mothers
ve because they are either ineligible based on employer size or job tenure
ool, Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy website
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6 Washington Post. (n.d.) Coronavirus: Case and death counts by place. Retrieved 2 February 2022, from
reported cases by state through February 2, 2022.
7 Scientific understanding of this new disease is still developing and estimates vary of the incidence of lasting health effects of COVID-19.
https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=dp03&tid=ACSDP1Y2019.DP03&hidePreview=false
content/uploads/2020/07/Holding-Up-Half-the-Sky-Mothers-as-Breadwinners.pdf; "Key breadwinner" means a single mother who heads a household or a married mother who contributes 40 percent or more of the couple’s joint earnings. Nationally, 79 percent of Black mothers are key breadwinners; 64 percent of Native American mothers are key breadwinners; 60 percent of mothers identifying as multiracial or “other” race are key breadwinners; 49 percent of Latina mothers are key breadwinners; 48 percent of white mothers are key breadwinners; and 43 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander mothers are key breadwinners.


The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at NationalPartnership.org.

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