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California Nurse-Midwives Association



California Pan-Ethnic
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Coalition of Labor Union Women
www.cluw.org



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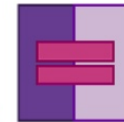
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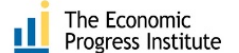
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UNIDOS US WORKSAFE
STRONGER COMMUNITIES. STRONGER AMERICA. safety, health, and justice for workers

August 26, 2022

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of the State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 951 (Durazo): Affordable Paid Leave for All

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the following organizations, we respectfully request your signature on Senate Bill 951 (Durazo). We believe that every Californian should be able to take paid time from work to bond with a new child, care for a seriously ill family member, or recover from a serious health condition without jeopardizing their economic security. In the absence of a federal paid family and medical leave program, California's State Disability Insurance (SDI) and Paid Family Leave (PFL) programs were designed in recognition of the fact that when family members can access leave for these reasons, the whole state benefits.

However, there is a significant weak spot in California's PFL and SDI programs. Because of low wage-replacement rates, they remain out of reach for lower and middle-income Californians. SDI and PFL currently provide benefits equal to only 60% of most workers' wages, making them unaffordable for too many families. Californians earning lower wages cannot afford to take a 40% pay cut while on leave, so, instead, they miss out on critical bonding time (exacerbating the childcare crisis), return to work too soon despite serious health conditions, and are unable to care for their loved ones in their times of need.

SB 951 would increase wage replacement rates for PFL + SDI to make Paid Family Leave and State Disability Insurance accessible to all Californians. This legislation would modify PFL and SDI to provide lower income workers with 90% of their regular income by January 1, 2025. Specifically, the 90% will apply to workers making 70% or less of the state average weekly wage (for 2022, about \$57,000/year). This increased benefit would be fully funded by removing the contribution ceiling, ensuring that all California employees contribute an equal percentage of their income into the fund. 91 percent of California workers

would see no change in their annual contribution into the fund, and may actually see their contributions go down.¹

Without your signature on SB 951, California's PFL and SDI payment rates will drop to providing only 55% of regular wages on January 1, 2023, which would make California's payments rates the lowest in the country.

The choice is clear, California should lead the nation, not fall further behind.

SB 951 is supported by more than 150 organizations representing diverse constituencies including advocates for families with young children, older Californians, parents and caregivers, domestic violence prevention advocates, small businesses, health and racial equity groups and worker and community advocacy organizations. It is a California Legislative Women's Caucus budget priority and a California Latino Legislative Caucus policy priority.

Increasing payment rates for PFL and SDI is a gender and racial justice issue. Lower-wage workers, who cannot afford to take PFL or SDI at their current wage replacement rates, are more likely to be women, born outside of the United States, or to identify as Black or Latinx.² Because these workers pay into the Disability Insurance Fund out of every paycheck but are unable to support their families with its benefits, their contributions subsidize higher wage workers' leaves. Those earning under \$20K/year make up 39% of the workforce paying into the DI Fund, but only 14% and 18% of PFL and SDI claims respectively.³

This is a health equity issue. A wide body of research shows that paid family leave improves health outcomes. Paid family leave also improves worker retention and productivity, saving employers money. In fact, Small Business Majority polling demonstrates the vast majority of small businesses support publicly-administered paid leave programs.⁴

California led the way by passing the first paid family leave law in the nation but has fallen behind, providing low wage workers with some of the lowest benefits

¹ Source: Budget Center analysis of US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey public-use microdata analyzed online from IPUMS CPS (University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org)

² <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/low-wage-work-in-california-data-explorer/>

³ <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/paid-family-leave-program-is-out-of-reach-for-many-californians/>

⁴ <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/workforce/california-small-business-owners-support-expanding-state-s-paid-family-and-medical-leave-program>

nationwide.⁵ California's PFL should benefit all families, not just those with high incomes or generational savings to fall back on. The ability to bond with a child, care for an ill family member, or heal should be a right, not something that depends on your incomes.

For all of these reasons, we urge you to support California's families and sign SB 951 into law. We cannot afford to move backwards when we know how critical SDI and PFL are to the health and wellbeing of California workers and their families.

Sincerely,

9to5 National Association of Working Women

9to5, National Association of Working Women - WI Chapter

A Better Balance

ACCESS Reproductive Justice

ACLU California Action

Alabama Institute for Social Justice

Alliance for a Better Community

American Association of University Women California

Association of California Caregiver Resource Centers

Bet Tzedek Legal Services

BreastfeedLA

Buen Vecino

California Alliance for Retired Americans

California Association of Food Banks

California Breastfeeding Coalition

California Catholic Conference

California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

California Employment Lawyers Association

⁵ <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/paid-family-leave-and-state-disability-insurance-benefits-are-insufficient/>

California Health Professional Student Alliance
California Immigrant Policy Center
California Labor Federation
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
California Nurse-Midwives Association
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
California Physicians Alliance
California WIC Association
California Women's Law Center
California Work & Family Coalition
Campbell High School Teachers Association
Caring Across Generations
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
Center for Economic and Policy Research
Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Workers' Rights
Central Coast Early Childhood Advocacy Network
Centro Legal de la Raza
Children Now
Children's Defense Fund-California
Chinese Progressive Association
Citizen Action of NY
Citizens for Choice
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE)
Coalition for Social Justice
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations

Coalition Of Union Labor Women, Sacramento Capital Chapter
COLAGE

CommonDefense.us

Communications Workers of America

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)

DC Paid Leave Campaign

Disability Rights California

Economic Opportunity Institute

Economic Progress Institute

Electric Universe

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC) fiscally sponsored by
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Equal Rights Advocates

Evolve California

Families In Transition of Santa Cruz County, Inc.

Family Caregiver Alliance

Family Forward Oregon

Family Values @ Work

Feminist Majority Foundation

First 5 Alameda County

First 5 Association of CA

First 5 California

First 5 Humboldt

First 5 LA

First 5 Monterey County

First 5 San Mateo County

First 5 Sonoma County

First 5 Ventura County

Food Empowerment Project
Friends Committee on Legislation of California
Girls Republic
Global Communities, Healthy Start
GRACE - End Child Poverty in California
Hand in Hand: the Domestic Employers Network
Healthy Kids Happy Faces
Human Impact Partners
Inland Empire Breastfeeding Coalition
Inland Equity Partnership
Jewish Center for Justice
Justice At Last
LA Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)
LA Best Babies Network
La Raza Centro Legal
Legal Aid at Work
Main Street Alliance
Maine Women's Lobby
Make It Work Nevada
Maternal and Child Health Access
Minnesotans for Paid Family & Medical Leave
Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project
MomsRising
Mother's Own Milk Matters
NARAL Pro-Choice California
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter
National Council of Jewish Women California
National Council of Jewish Women Los Angeles

National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Employment Law Project
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Political Caucus of California
NC Families Care Coalition
Nevada County Citizens for Choice
New Jersey Citizen Action
New Jersey Time to Care Coalition
North Bay Labor Council
Nourish California
Nursing Mothers Counsel
Orange County Equality Coalition
Our Family Coalition
Paid Leave for All
Parent Voices California
PICO California
Pilipino Workers Center
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
Poder Latinx
Positive Discipline Community Resources
Prevention Institute
Public Counsel
Public Health Alliance of Southern California
Rape Counseling Services of Fresno
Restaurant Opportunities Centers of California
ROC United
RootsAction.org

San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition
San Francisco Senior and Disability Action
Santa Clara County Wage Theft Coalition
SEIU California
Small Business Majority
Southern California Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health
(SoCalCOSH)
Street Level Health Project
TechEquity Collaborative
Thai Community Development Center
UFCW Western States Council
UnidosUS
UNITE-LA
United for Respect
United Ways of California
Voices for Progress
Walnut Avenue Family & Women's Center
Warehouse Worker Resource Center
Watsonville Law Center
Women Employed
Women For: Orange County
Working Partnerships USA
Worksafe
YWCA Golden Gate Silicon Valley