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DC Paid Family Leave Campaign Celebrates New York's Progress on 12 Weeks of Paid Family Leave for All

New York budget advances paid family leave and raises the minimum wage

WASHINGTON, DC – Joanna Blotner, DC Paid Family Leave Campaign Manager, released the following statement congratulating New York on becoming the fourth state to ensure all working people have access to paid family and medical leave:

“We congratulate our fellow activists in New York who worked tirelessly to achieve this momentous victory for working families, and salute the elected leaders who listened to their voices and took action. Today’s families need both higher wages and paid leave to pay the bills, care for children and loved ones, and have a fair shot at a decent life. We’re excited to see New York lead the way— leadership we hope the DC Council and Mayor Bowser will follow.

When fully phased in, New York’s plan would enable all working people to access 12 weeks of paid family leave, at two-thirds pay reimbursement, and with job protection beginning after 6 months of service. While there is much to celebrate in New York’s proposed policy, the DC Paid Family Leave Coalition, which is advocating for a similar policy in the DC Council, notes that flat-rate wage replacements would not go far enough in meeting the needs of DC’s families: a family already struggling on near-minimum wages cannot get by on two-thirds of that pay – especially during tough times.

During the [February public hearing on the Universal Paid Leave Act](#), Earl Pass of Ward 8 shared that he couldn’t afford to lose any pay when his son was shot and hospitalized and Mr. Pass was forced to go between work and the hospital bedside. He asked the Council, “How is it OK for a father to choose between caring for his son and working to keep a roof over our heads?” Similarly, Patria Harrell, also of Ward 8, shared that when she took unpaid maternity leave, she fell behind on all her bills and had her electricity cut off. Though she is back at work now, she said she is still struggling to catch up on those bills one year later. Their stories underscore the urgent need for both paid leave and higher wages in the District, because no one who works as hard as they do should be living in poverty and only scraping by.

Losing pay, for most DC families, is the quickest route to financial troubles, and makes it harder for striving families to stay stable, care for each other, and access opportunity. No one should have to choose between providing for their family and caring for them. As New York has demonstrated, expanding economic opportunities with paid family leave and higher wages is a bipartisan priority and in documents leaked today from polling commissioned by state chambers of commerce, it is also clear that it is a [priority for nearly 80% of business leaders](#). We look forward to DC leading on leave and fighting for a \$15 minimum wage through a strong set of policies that hold central the needs of DC’s lowest income families.”

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