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June 2, 2009

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I am writing today to urge you to vote in favor of the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009 (H.R. 626) when it comes to a vote. The bill would provide four weeks of paid parental leave to federal and congressional employees for the birth or adoption of a child and ease the burden for parents too often forced to choose between their paycheck and their child.

The federal government is the country's largest employer. These workers, some of which are AFSCME members, are imperative to the structure and function of the federal government. Most are entitled to 12 weeks of unpaid leave under the Family Medical Leave Act. However, if an employee wants to receive pay for any portion of their parental leave they must use accrued vacation time or sick days, a difficult task for those who are newly employed or have experienced any health problems in the past. This outdated policy does not promote a family-friendly environment and stands in stark contrast with the rest of the industrialized world.

The United States is one of the only remaining industrialized nations in the world that does not offer paid parental leave to all workers. Most countries recognize how important it is for mothers to recover from childbirth and for parents to nurture their children during some of their most developmental stages. As the federal government often sets the standard for employee benefits, passage of this bill should inspire other sectors of government and private corporations to offer paid parental leave and bring our country closer to the global standard of paid parental leave. Additionally, offering paid leave will improve the recruitment and retention for federal employees and make federal agencies more competitive with other top tier U.S. firms.

AFSCME strongly urges you to support the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009 and promote the values of parenthood and family.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Loveless
Director of Legislation

CML:ads

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