

June 16, 2008

Dear Representative:

As President of the National Treasury Employees Union, I would like to ask for your support for passage of HR 5781, a bill to provide four weeks of paid parental leave to Federal and Congressional employees.

It became clear to me how vital this leave is when NTEU first testified in the Federal Workforce Subcommittee before Chairman Danny Davis on the subject of paid parental leave. After my first note to the field about the hearing, and at each subsequent step of the way, my voice mail and e-mail has been flooded with members wanting to know more. Every day, my boxes were full of men and women with stories of hardship they endured because of the choices they made. Some had terminally ill family members, and having used up all their sick leave and annual leave on that, had nothing left to use upon the birth of a child. Others were ill themselves, but kept working because they had used up all of their leave when they had a child.

While the Family and Medical Leave Act has been a terrific first step in helping Americans balance family needs and work needs, providing important job protection rights, the sad truth is that many workers cannot forgo their income to use the right. That is why it is so important to pass HR 5781.

In a time when there are dire predictions about being able to attract and retain enough employees to do the work of government, when it has become clear that the Federal government is going to have to step up in order to continue to draw "the best and the brightest," paid parental leave can provide that kind of incentive.

Please vote in favor of HR 5781. If you have any further questions about the bill or about paid parental leave, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Colleen M. Kelley
National President