

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS



815 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

JOHN J. SWEENEY
PRESIDENT

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
SECRETARY-TREASURER

ARLENE HOLT BAKER
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

LEGISLATIVE ALERT!

(202) 637-5057

June 4, 2009

Dear Representative:

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) strongly supports HR 626, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009. This vital legislation would provide all Executive and Legislative Branch federal employees with income support for up to four weeks of parental leave in order to facilitate bonding between parents with newborn infants or newly adopted children.

Federal workers are among those who must choose between meeting their family obligations and maintaining family income because under current law, no part of the leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act is guaranteed to be paid leave. The years when employees are most likely to become parents coincide with the early years of their career, when they are least likely to have accumulated enough savings to forgo their salary for several weeks. Workers early in their career are also least likely to have accumulated enough annual leave to cover the time needed to provide adequate care for a newborn or newly adopted child. As a result, many workers are effectively prevented from using FMLA leave at all.

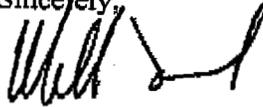
Spending time with a newborn or a newly adopted child should not be viewed as a luxury that only the rich should be able to afford. Virtually all research on child development and family stability supports the notion that parent-infant bonding during the earliest months of life is crucial. Children who form strong emotional bonds or "attachment" with their parents are most likely to enjoy good health and have positive relations with others throughout their lifetimes. H.R. 626 takes as a given that all children who become new members of a family need this critical time with their parents, and provides all parents-adoptive and biological--equal treatment.

More and more private sector employers provide paid parental leave because they recognize that productivity is lost when a parent returns to work before they have found appropriate child care for a newborn or newly adopted child, or when an employee comes to work ill because all leave was exhausted during the protracted adoption process. Without the extension of paid parental leave to all Executive and Legislative branch employees, the federal government will lose good workers, trained at taxpayer expense, who decide to leave federal service for an employer who offers paid parental leave.

- 2 -

The benefits to children and families of four weeks of paid parental leave have been well established. The AFL-CIO urges Congress to pass the Federal Employee Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Samuel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "W" and a long, sweeping tail.

William Samuel, Director
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT