

July 29, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer, and
Minority Leader McCarthy:

We are pastoral leaders, daughters, sons, fathers, mothers, grandparents, brothers, and sisters. COVID-19 continues to affect every area of our lives and our communities from health care to schools to religious worship. As COVID-19 disrupts our common life, families will, ultimately, bear crucial responsibilities - caring for those who are sick, attending to children and loved ones when schools and other places of care close. All families, therefore, need a solid base of support.

In March, Congress enacted an emergency paid sick and family leave program as part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), enabling paid time off for COVID-related illness or care. Many households, however, fall through gaps in the law's coverage and application. We urge Congress to close these gaps, enable all families to care, and protect public health during COVID-19.

Guarantee emergency paid leave for COVID-19 related quarantine, illness, and caregiving, and for those who are pregnant and welcoming new children during COVID. This includes:

- Care for a family member after exposure or infection by COVID-19.
- Care for oneself after exposure or infection by COVID-19.
- Care for a child whose school or place of care is closed or who is participating in distance learning due to COVID-19.
- Care for a disabled or elder family member at risk of COVID-19 in their place of care or whose place of care is unavailable.
- Bereavement for a family member who has died.
- Care for oneself and one's child during the prenatal period, postnatal period, foster care, or adoption.

Family leave should support a range of family caregivers, similar to emergency paid sick days, including: parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and other close relatives.

Extend emergency paid leave to all workers, regardless of employer size. The FFCRA excluded individuals who work for employers with more than 500 workers from its emergency leave mandate and created gaps for essential health care workers and employees of small employers. These exclusions should be remedied. The employees of large organizations and essential organizations are just as likely to need leave as other workers and denying paid leave

undermines public health. Among those still without paid leave are many women and workers of color. As households around the country look to paid leave to deal with school closures and distance learning, excluding workers from emergency paid leave could widen existing educational achievement gaps and further the spread of the virus.

Extend emergency paid leave past December 2020. The FFCRA is currently set to expire at the end of 2020, too early to accommodate COVID-19's ongoing effects on health and family.

Because of COVID-19, families must make hard choices in the face of uncertainty. Paid family leave protects family caregivers from economic hardship while sustaining their connection to employment. Universal paid sick leave is a public health necessity. We encourage you to strengthen and extend emergency paid leave during this crucial time.

Sincerely,

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