



IWV Welcomes Formation of New Paid Leave Task Force

February 7, 2023

The Honorable Stephanie I. Bice (R-OK)
U.S. House of Representatives
2437 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA)
U.S. House of Representatives
1727 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Bice, Representative Houlahan, and fellow members of the task force,

Americans want to provide working parents with the support they need to balance work and caregiving responsibilities. Independent Women's Voice (IWV), a leading national women's organization, welcomes and applauds your willingness to engage in this important debate and carefully examine proposals that aim to expand access to paid time off.

IWV's mission is to advance policies that aren't just well-intended, but actually enhance people's freedom, opportunities, and well-being. IWV, along with Independent Women's Forum (IWF), IWV's sister organization, has long been a thought leader in developing and advancing policy solutions that expand paid leave in a fair and flexible way.

IWV has serious concerns about any proposal that drastically expands the government's role in paid family leave, as this approach will disrupt existing work arrangements and disadvantage low-wage workers. Companies will simply opt to comply with federal requirements for paid time off, rather than finding win-win arrangements, such as telecommuting and flex-time, that work for their employees and their businesses. Furthermore, a federally mandated paid family leave program will fail to target assistance to those who need it and will burden all low-income workers with a regressive new tax. Indeed, **studies** have consistently shown that payroll-tax-funded paid leave programs in states and foreign countries consistently transfer money from low-wage workers to wealthier ones.

As you weigh recommendations for policy reforms, we urge you to champion policies that will give women greater opportunities and more choices, without the downsides of a new government entitlement. Enclosed you will find additional information on proposed solutions as well as the unintended consequences of a one-size-fits-few government program that will leave millions worse off:

- **The Paid Leave Debate in 60 Seconds** - In 60 seconds, learn how a paid leave entitlement will move women backwards by funding one-size-fits-few government programs at the expense of flexibility and choice. Instead, policymakers should give families more options that suit their preferences on family leave.
- **How to Talk About: PAID LEAVE** - In this "How To Talk About" guide from Independent Women's Voice (IWW), you'll find fast facts and common misperceptions about paid leave. Independent Women's Forum (IWF) and IWW have long supported policies that give women new and better options and that return decision making over our personal decisions to individuals. This includes helping people save by modernizing tax-preferred savings accounts, advancing existing benefits, increasing flexible work arrangements, and more.
- **Policy Focus: Avoiding Paid Leave Pitfalls** - In this policy focus, IWF President Carrie Lukas discusses why any paid leave proposal must take into account how families' needs differ. Families don't require one-size-fits-all government subsidies and programs and shouldn't be forced to pay into a system if they think it is poor value.
- **Running Paid Leave Through Social Security Is The Smartest Live Option** - This article explains why giving workers access to support through Social Security, an idea first proposed by **IWF's Kristin Shapiro**, provides help for those who need it most, while minimizing economic disruption and preserving flexibility and incentives for private paid leave.

As this working group examines different approaches to providing access to paid leave, IWW strongly supports budget-neutral policies that empower workers and give them new and better options without imposing the costs of a new entitlement. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this critical issue as well as any of the solutions that we have put forward for your consideration. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Hadley Heath Manning

Vice President for Policy

Independent Women's Voice