

December 19, 2024

Pennsylvania House Labor & Industry Committee Members
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Support for the Family Care Act

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) urges the House Labor & Industry Committee to prioritize advancing the Family Care Act out of committee in the upcoming 2025-2026 legislative session.

CLASP is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit dedicated to advancing anti-poverty policy solutions that disrupt structural racism and remove barriers blocking people from economy security and opportunity. With over 50 years of experience, we have deep expertise in a wide range of programs and policy ideas. We work closely with anti-poverty advocates, labor unions, worker centers, and other stakeholders in child and family well-being, higher education, workforce development, and economic justice. We work to amplify the voices of directly impacted workers and families to help public officials design and implement effective programs.

At CLASP, we seek to promote an economy where no worker – regardless of background, occupation, or industry – is forced to choose between their health or the financial security of their family. We urge the committee to recognize the critical need for a robust paid family and medical leave program in the Commonwealth.

The Family Care Act would establish a paid family and medical leave program in Pennsylvania, a historic feat that would significantly improve the health and well-being of workers and their families while driving economic growth and cost savings for employers. and promote GDP growth and cost savings for employers. This program would enable workers to navigate major life events, such as welcoming a new child, recovering from a serious illness or injury, or caring for a loved one, without jeopardizing their employment, financial security, or their loved ones' health and safety.

States with existing statewide paid leave programs have demonstrated that such policies benefit families, businesses, and state economies alike. Workers often face impossible choices between their health or caregiving responsibilities and keeping their jobs. For instance, research has shown that as many as one in seven low-wage workers have lost a job due to illness or caregiving duties. By providing access to paid leave, the Family Care Act would enable workers to prioritize their health and well-being without being forced out of the labor market. In turn, families would gain financial stability, and employers would benefit from reduced turnover and increased worker retention.

A statewide paid family and medical leave program would also support small businesses by helping them attract and retain employees and compete with larger firms that can offer more generous benefits.

Additionally, in states that have implemented paid leave programs, business owners have reported lower costs, higher employee morale, and improved productivity.

Notably, Pennsylvania's neighboring states – New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland – have already enacted paid leave policies. For Pennsylvania to remain competitive and retain young families, it is vital to prioritize work-family policies like paid leave, which strengthen communities and drive economic growth across the Commonwealth. This becomes increasingly important as businesses across the country struggle to recruit and retain workers.

Pennsylvania's working families and small businesses are the backbone of the economy across the Keystone State. The Family Care Act is an opportunity to demonstrate the committee's support of families and small businesses by passing a statewide paid family and medical leave program that is both pro-family and pro-business.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions, please contact policy analyst Diane Harris at dharris@clasp.org.