



House Bill 91: Family and Medical Leave

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Chairman Brinkman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Boggs, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony from the Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio (UHCAN Ohio). UHCAN Ohio is a statewide nonprofit organization uniting consumers and their allies to assure everyone has access to quality, affordable health care. We are a member of Advocates for Ohio's Future, the umbrella health and human services coalition for the state of Ohio.

UHCAN Ohio supports House Bill 91 because **access to paid family leave is a crucial policy to promote healthy communities, families and individuals.**

Parental Leave

The cost of labor and delivery alone now costs on average more than \$4,500 - even with insurance. That doesn't include medical costs leading up to the delivery room or medical costs after the birth of the baby. With these medical bills, a woman cannot afford to lose her job, let alone her health insurance. It's no wonder that 1 in 4 working women are back to work within two weeks of having a baby.

Access to paid family leave lowers maternal stress during pregnancy, perhaps due to increased financial and job security. Maternal stress during pregnancy has been shown to adversely affect both infant and long-term child well-being.¹ When parents have access to paid family and medical leave, the infant mortality rate drops. In fact, each month of paid family leave has been associated with a 13 percent decrease in infant mortality. Paid family leave has also been shown to increase breast-feeding rates among new mothers and reduce infant hospitalizations²

Caregiving Leave

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, about one in six Americans (16 percent) provide unpaid care to an elder (someone aged 65 and older).³ This can include a father caring for a child with a heart condition; an adult son caring for his fading mother; or a husband who is coordinating cancer treatment and care for his wife. Access to paid family and medical leave to address these caregiving responsibilities has been shown to lead to a number of positive health outcomes, including speedier recovery time, reduced hospital stays, and lower health care costs.⁴

¹ Health Affairs (2019). [Paid Family Leave Policies And Population Health](https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20190301.484936/full/)
<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20190301.484936/full/>

² *ibid*

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic News Release, [Unpaid Eldercare in the United States--2015-16 Summary](#).

⁴ Taylor MR, O'Connor P Resident parents and shorter hospital stay. *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 1989;**64**:274-276.



An estimated 14 percent of U.S. adults, 34.2 million, provide unpaid care for a person 50 and older, most of whom are parents or parents-in-law.⁵ One study found that the state's paid family and medical leave program reduced nursing home usage 11 percent.⁶ Many people would prefer to live their last days at home with their families and in-home care is significantly cheaper. This is only possible when caregivers can pay bills and keep their job.

By assisting with in-home care expenses and reducing the number of our family members in nursing homes, paid family and medical leave can save families and the state money, and help our communities thrive. Nursing home care accounts for the largest share of long-term care costs in the country. Medicaid is the primary payer for 63 percent of nursing facility residents. When you have a paid family and medical leave program that allows people to age in their own homes, which is what 7 out of 10 people will tell you is their preference, you are also saving Medicaid dollars.⁷

Personal Medical Leave

Paid leave for personal medical reasons plays a crucial role in promoting stronger health outcomes and recovery for someone managing their own medical condition. In Ohio, 62 percent of working people do not even have access to *unpaid* leave through Family Medical Leave Act.⁸ Without access to paid family and medical leave, people in Ohio don't get the care they need because they cannot afford to risk losing their paycheck, their job, and their health insurance.

Action

Working people in Ohio face the impossible "choice" caring for their family or themselves, and keeping their job. But it doesn't have to be this way. Access to paid family and medical leave can serve as the workplace support that Ohioans need to address their health needs without risking their job or their paycheck.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 91.

⁵ The National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) & the AARP Public Policy Institute (2015). [Caregiving in the U.S. 2015](#). Page 9.

⁶ Arora, K., & Wolf, D. A. (2018). [Does Paid Family Leave Reduce Nursing Home Use? The California Experience](#). *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 37(1), 38-62.

⁷ Paid Leave for the US. [Making Caregiving Work for America's Families](#). https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K_4Eyd6rZi_om8qvRnzAeYiLwmW1WnyI/view

⁸ K Arora, DA Wolf (2017). [Does Paid Family Leave Reduce Nursing Home Use? The California Experience](#) <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/pam.22038>