

PRESS RELEASE



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In The News: Chorus of Powerful Stories Highlight Urgency to Pass Inclusive, National Paid Leave Policy

Washington, DC — Following the announcement of the Biden Administration's American Families Plan, workers and advocates across America have been sharing their stories to drive home that passing an inclusive national paid leave program is critical to an equitable economic recovery.

On MSNBC, **Bethany Fauteux of the Coalition for Social Justice and Paid Leave for All's Voices of Workers** [spoke with Katy Tur](#) to share the story of how she became a paid leave advocate after being forced to return to her job in a childcare center just three weeks after giving birth. "I can't take back the time that I lost, but I can fight for my fellow Americans," **she told Tur**. "In this country, if we want something badly enough, we find the money. I think it's possible to find the money to help the regular working public who desperately needs it, our children, and the most vulnerable in our society."

[WATCH: Paid leave advocate: "I can't take back the time that I lost, but I can fight for my fellow Americans"](#)



*Tameka Henry, community activist and co-founder of Rise Up Nevada and also a member of Paid Leave for All's Voices of Workers shared her family's powerful story with [Lana Zak on CBS News](#). In 2006, Tameka's husband was diagnosed with a chronic illness that resulted in frequent hospitalizations and an inability to work, leaving Tameka struggling with how to provide care for her husband, maintain a stable job, and care for the couple's children. "You have to choose between your life and your livelihood, and that's simply not okay," **Henry told Zak**. "What this plan would mean for Americans is having that stability – having the option to take care of your family and getting a paycheck at the same time."*

[WATCH: Biden's \\$225 billion 'American Families Plan' calls for paid family and medical leave](#)



Henry's story is also featured in a recent article from [The Guardian](#), highlighting how paid leave is long overdue in the U.S. and how the Biden Administration's proposal in the American Families Plan could help bring America's workforce in line with global peers.

From [the article](#):

Joe Biden has now introduced a groundbreaking proposal to help families like Henry's. As part of his American Families Plan, the president is calling for a \$225bn investment to provide 12 weeks of paid parental, family and sick leave to virtually all American workers in the next 10 years.

"No one should have to choose between a job and paycheck or taking care of themselves and their loved ones – a parent, a spouse, or child," Biden said in his first presidential address to a joint session of Congress on Wednesday.

The proposal marks a historic first: no US president has ever before introduced a plan to create a comprehensive paid leave program at the national level. After decades of pushing for such a program, paid leave advocates feel like it is at last within reach, as Democrats control the White House and Congress. Activists say it is an issue whose time has finally come.

For Henry, who has been juggling the responsibilities of her job and care of her husband for years, a national paid leave program is "long overdue". Many progressive activists and lawmakers agree, noting it has been 28 years since Bill Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act,

which provides workers with unpaid leave to care for themselves or loved ones.

...

“We really need to rethink how we really value caregiving in this country,” said Carol Joyner, the director of the labor project at Family Values @ Work. “Women have been saying this for a very long time, but the pandemic has essentially demonstrated that women are carrying the caregiving burden in this country.”

The pandemic also demonstrated the urgent need to provide paid family leave for all working women, Joyner added. After all, many low-wage workers who have performed essential duties in the past year do not currently qualify for paid leave through their employers.

“The folks that were saving our lives and are saving our lives during this pandemic – bringing us food, treating us in the hospitals – they are least likely to have paid leave,” Joyner said.

Joyner’s organization is part of a coalition of groups participating in a \$6m media and organizing campaign to push Congress to approve national paid leave.

“We often say what had been our mission before the pandemic now feels like our mandate,” said Dawn Huckelbridge, the director of Paid Leave for All, which is also participating in the campaign. “This could be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to learn something from this crisis and to do something that will help all working families’ lives.”

Read more in [The Guardian](#).

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The Paid Leave for All campaign is a growing collaborative of organizations fighting for paid family and medical leave for all working people. Learn more about Paid Leave for All [here](#).