

PRESS RELEASE



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In The News: Momentum Builds Amid Growing Calls to Pass National, Inclusive Paid Leave Policy

Washington, DC — Momentum to pass an inclusive, national paid leave policy is growing as President Biden unveiled his American Families Plan, which calls for the creation of a national paid family and medical leave program.

This week, Paid Leave for All Director Dawn Huckelbridge and Rep. Colin Allred (D-TX) joined Jessica Yellin for News Not Noise to break down how a national paid leave policy would help working families and small businesses across America, and discuss the path forward for passing paid leave in the coming months.

Watch a recording of their [full conversation on Instagram Live](#):



*“We’ve learned during this pandemic the need for us to understand the family needs and family dynamics of people we work with and work around. We have to be flexible to understand that there are things going on in people’s lives and that human infrastructure is just as important as how long it takes for you to get to work in your car or whether or not you have a train accessible to you. These are just as critical to our overall economic output.” — **Rep. Colin Allred***

*“Workers will have to take time off no matter what policies are in place. There are going to be unexpected health crises and caretaking needs, so we have to be prepared to face those shifts and those changes. This is a policy that would provide direct assistance to workers to help them pay for it.” — **Dawn Huckelbridge, Paid Leave for All Director***

Their conversation follows a profile from [The Atlantic’s](#) Isaac Dove discussing the building momentum to pass paid leave in the House of Representatives and growing support across the aisle for a paid leave program.

Read more in [The Atlantic](#):

Congress has never done much to help Americans who aren't in the House or Senate take paid leave either. But action is coming, Richie Neal promised me. As the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, the Massachusetts Democrat is one of the most powerful people on Capitol Hill. When congressional leaders met with Biden in the Oval Office at the beginning of February, Neal told the president that whatever the White House's plans might be, he would include paid leave in upcoming legislation. "And I'm going to be with you," Neal said Biden told him. (The president and his aides have publicly remained cagey about his plans.) Last week, Neal held a Zoom hearing on caregiving, enabling women from all over the country to testify, and today he's releasing a paid-leave proposal he's hoping Biden will support.

"There's a rhythm to legislative life, and the pandemic has been so gripping that now is the time to do it, while the memories are fresh," Neal told me last week. He ticked through the statistics about the number of people who are unemployed or have left the workforce, about how many women have been forced to choose between their job and child care. "You could actually meld this need, and treat it simultaneously as a good long-term investment in worker productivity and address a real, pressing social need," Neal said.

Neal on Tuesday is releasing what he's calling the Building an Economy for Families Act, which would create a new entitlement of 12 weeks' leave through a public program administered by the Treasury Department, existing comprehensive state paid-leave programs, or employers providing high-quality benefits. The trick, as with anything in Congress, will be paying for the program. Though Republican Senators Mitt Romney of Utah and Marco Rubio of Florida have been supportive of tax credits to pay for child care, a leave law would require a huge amount of government support. Republicans are unlikely to support raising taxes (probably by eliminating Trump-era cuts) in order to pay for a leave program, but Democrats are unlikely to support cutting existing programs to redirect funding, as Republicans want. So where's the money going to come from? "As chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, I'm not going to tell you," Neal said with a laugh, reflecting the wariness of Democrats to give opponents a target to fire at before building support for the bill. I asked Neal if he's optimistic that the paid-leave bill he wants

could get Republican votes. “I am going to make every effort to get their support,” he said gingerly.

While campaigning for president, Biden advocated for a policy that would guarantee up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave, plus seven days of sick leave and tax credits to help families pay for child care. The proposal also included paid leave for survivors of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault. “Biden will pay for this national paid leave program,” a statement on his website explained, “by making sure the super wealthy pay their fair share in taxes.” Advocates committed to the issue have avoided criticizing Biden for waiting until now to make good on those promises, wary, as many liberals have been, of taking shots at the new president. They seem to have gotten their way: the \$1 trillion proposal Biden is expected to lay out tomorrow night will reportedly include a \$225 billion plan for leave, but the White House is approaching the rollout carefully. A White House aide, requesting anonymity to discuss internal discussions, would only say that Biden “has been clear about his support for permanent paid family and medical leave. It was President Biden who included emergency paid leave in his rescue plan; and it was President Biden who signed into law an extension of a paid leave credit so that more families right now have access to paid leave.”

Read the full story [here](#).

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[Paid Leave for All](#) is a campaign fighting for paid family and medical leave for all working people.