

Press Release



AAF Research Finds Current Paid Leave Proposals Miss the Mark

PATRICK HEFFLINGER | FEBRUARY 22, 2018

Today the American Action Forum (@AAF) released new research on paid family and medical leave in the United States. In light of recent paid leave policy proposals, the research analyzes the paid leave benefits available to workers in the private sector for family and medical reasons. The findings provide a more complete picture of how these workers currently afford family and medical leave. Below are key findings from the research:

- In 2012, 12.6 percent of workers took family and medical leave for an average of 7.2 weeks, and over half of those workers took leave for personal medical reasons;
- 66.2 percent of workers who took family and medical leave were paid by their employers, and men and women received paid leave for family and medical reasons at similar rates;
- When workers were paid, they most frequently used a general paid time off benefit (69.3 percent), personal days (35.5 percent), and temporary disability insurance (21.4 percent)—not a defined family and medical leave benefit; and
- Only 33.3 percent of workers in low-income families were paid while on family and medical leave, compared to 66.2 percent and 83.7 percent of those in middle- and high-income families, respectively, yet lower-income workers took leave more frequently.

The research concludes that many of the proposals currently under consideration do not adequately address the lack of paid leave for those who most need it. The study's author, AAF's Ben Gitis, states that "proposals that prioritize providing the benefits to low-income families would be particularly helpful in expanding access to paid leave."