



FACT SHEET: Paid Family & Medical Leave in Mississippi

No one should have to sacrifice their financial security in order to care for themselves or a loved one. Paid family & medical leave would ensure that Mississippi families can take the time they need to care for themselves and their loved ones without sacrificing their income or savings.

Mississippi families need stronger support for medical and caregiving needs.

- The United States and Mississippi currently have no law providing all workers with paid leave to care for a new child or a seriously ill family member, or to recover from their own serious illness.
- **Nearly 76% of workers in Mississippi do not receive paid family leave** through their employers.¹ Low-wage workers and people of color, who are more likely to depend on every paycheck, are even less likely to have access to paid family leave.²
- Paid medical leave protects workers with serious medical needs when limited paid sick days are not enough. **3 in 10 workers in the South do not have a single paid sick day**,³ but for those who do, the national average is just 8 sick days per year,⁴ far too little for a severe condition like cancer.
- The federal **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** only provides **unpaid leave**—which many families cannot afford—and over 60% of Mississippi workers are not covered by this law.⁵

A paid family and medical leave insurance program would protect hardworking families without burdening employers.

- An **employee-funded family and medical leave insurance program** would ensure that all Mississippi workers can take time to care for themselves or a loved one without sacrificing their income or savings.
- By contributing very little each week (typically less than the cost of a cup of coffee), employees would pay into a fund to be used **to care for a new child, or in case of a family or medical emergency**.

Paid family & medical leave is good for business, especially in today's competitive labor market.

- Paid family and medical leave helps **increase employee retention, lower turnover, boost productivity, and improve morale**.
 - 91% of employers surveyed in one state reported that paid family leave had either a positive or neutral effect on profitability.⁶ A large majority of employers also reported positive or neutral effects on productivity (88.5%) and employee morale (98.6%).⁷
- An employee-funded paid family and medical leave program would help **level the playing field for small businesses** by allowing them to provide a benefit that often only larger companies can offer.⁸

Paid family & medical leave is good for the economy.

- By keeping workers with serious medical or caregiving needs **attached to the workforce**, paid family and medical leave **decreases reliance on public assistance** and other government benefits, which creates taxpayer savings.
 - According to one study, parents who return after a paid leave are significantly less likely to receive public assistance in the year after the birth of their child than parents who take no leave.⁹
- By providing a private sector workplace benefit that other Southern states do not yet offer, Mississippi can compete with the robust economic development efforts of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, which are consistently ranked as the top states for business¹⁰ and best state economies.¹¹

Paid family & medical leave is good for public health.

- Paid leave can **help fight the opioid epidemic** by protecting workers' jobs and income while they seek residential treatment, which can be highly effective in treating addiction.¹²
- Family caregivers in Mississippi provide an estimated \$5.6 billion of caregiving contributions. This assistance helps ill and aging individuals recover more quickly and spend less time in hospitals, **reducing costs and relieving overcrowded health care facilities**. Three-fifths of family caregivers are employed in the workforce.¹³
- Paid leave encourages breastfeeding, which has lasting health benefits for babies and mothers. The median duration of breastfeeding doubled for new mothers who took paid family leave in one state.¹⁴

88% of Mississippi voters support creating an insurance plan to provide paid family & medical leave for employees to care for a sick family member, bond with a new baby, or recover from a major illness or injury.¹⁵

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, September). National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2023 (Excel tables). Retrieved 16 January 2024, from <https://www.bls.gov/ebs/publications/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2023.htm> (Percent of civilian workers who have access to paid family leave by Census division); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, November). Current Population Survey: State Employment and Unemployment (Table 1. Civilian labor force and unemployment by state and selected area, seasonally adjusted). Retrieved 16 January 2024, from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.t01.htm>.

² National Partnership for Women and Families, "Paid Family and Medical Leave: A Racial Justice Issue- and Opportunity," (2018), p. 5, <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/paid-leave/paid-family-and-medical-leave-racial-justice-issue-and-opportunity.pdf>. ³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employee Benefits Survey: Mar. 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/ebs/>.

⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employee Benefits Survey: Mar. 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/ebs/>.

⁵ Diversitydatakids.org. (2023, March). *Indicators of FMLA Eligibility and Affordability for Working Adults*. Retrieved 16 January 2024, from Brandeis University, The Heller School, Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy website https://data.diversitydatakids.org/dataset?vocab_Subtopic=FMLA&_ga=2.14449139.551199344.1673292061-1693714331.1656615545; Workers are considered unable to take unpaid FMLA leave because they are either ineligible based on employer size or job tenure requirements or because 12 weeks of lost wages from unpaid leave would result in their family income dropping to or below 200 percent of the Supplemental Poverty Measure.

⁶ A Better Balance, "Busting the Myths on Paid Family Leave," 2017, <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/busting-the-myths-on-paid-family-leave/>.

⁷ Linda Houser and Thomas P. Vartanian, "Pay Matters: The Positive Economic Impacts of Paid Family Leave for Families, Businesses and the Public, Rutgers Center for Women and Work (Jan. 2012), <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/other/pay-matters.pdf>.

⁸ A Better Balance, "Paid Family and Medical Leave Policies Help Small Businesses Thrive," Jul. 2024, <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/fact-sheet-paid-family-and-medical-leave-policies-help-small-businesses-thrive/>.

⁹ See Linda Houser and Thomas P. Vartanian, "Pay Matters: The Positive Economic Impacts of Paid Family Leave for Families, Businesses and the Public, Rutgers Center for Women and Work (Jan. 2012), <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/other/pay-matters.pdf>.

¹⁰ *America's Top States for Business 2024: The Full Rankings*, CNBC, Jul. 2024, <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/07/11/americas-top-states-for-business-full-rankings.html>.

¹¹ *These 10 U.S. States Have America's Best Economies in 2024*, CNBC, Jul. 2024, <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/07/18/americas-10-best-state-economies.html>.

¹² See Nat'l Inst. on Drug Abuse, *Treatment Approaches for Drug Addiction* (revised Jan. 2018), <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/treatment-approaches-drug-addiction>.

¹³ S. Reinhard, S. Caldera, A. Houser, R. B. Choula, *Valuing the Invaluable: 2023 Update, Strengthening Supports for Family Caregivers*, The AARP Public Policy Institute (March 2023), <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2023/3/valuing-the-invaluable-2023-update.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00082.006.pdf>.

¹⁴ Eileen Appelbaum and Ruth Milkman, *Leaves that Pay: Employer and Worker Experiences with Paid Family Leave in California*, <http://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

¹⁵ Multi-State Poll: Mississippi Findings, State Innovation Exchange (July 2020), p. 43, https://stateinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/TSPolling_MS_Six_Deck_2020.07.30-Read-Only.pdf.