



Why Paid Family and Medical Leave Matters

Emergencies arise for all of us at some point, but 87% of workers in New England lack access to paid leave. In Massachusetts, 1.2 million workers risk losing their jobs if they take time off work to take care of a family medical emergency or to care for a new child. Many workers who are eligible for leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act can't afford to take unpaid time off from work in an emergency. They're often left to choose between taking care of a child they love or keeping their job.

Paid family and medical leave would allow all workers to take time to take care of their health or the health of a loved one without fear of losing their job or the risk of financial ruin.

Our Campaign to Win Paid Family and Medical Leave for Massachusetts Workers

Our two bills, which will be filed separately in the House and in the Senate this month, would make employees eligible for job-protected paid leave to recover from a serious illness or injury, to care for a seriously ill or injured family member, or to care for a new child. The bills prohibit employer retaliation against workers who take time off under these conditions.

Under our legislation, employees taking paid leave would receive temporary disability benefits equal to a percentage of their average weekly wages, with a maximum weekly benefit of either \$650 or \$1,000. Paid leave would last up either 12 or 16 weeks to care for a family member or new child, and up to 26 weeks for an employee's own serious illness or injury.

Benefits would be funded through employer premium contributions to the new Family and Employment Security Trust Fund or to private insurance plans, and the bills would allow employers to require employees to contribute up to 50% of the cost of premiums. The bills phase in over several years, create a one-week waiting period before employees can receive benefits, use existing agencies for administration and enforcement, and allow companies to keep existing plans, all of which reduce costs.

Why We Need Paid Family and Medical Leave

Paid family and medical leave would help our state's workers, businesses, and economy. Workers could stay home with a newborn child or a seriously ill parent, or take time to recover after an unexpected illness. Businesses would benefit from healthier and more productive employees, while the reduction in worker turnover would generate savings for employers. Paid family and medical leave also keeps money in the pockets of families who then spend it in the local economy.

California, New York, Rhode Island, and New Jersey have paid family and medical leave, and both workers and businesses report positive effects. In a survey six years after California's law was implemented, 89 to 99 percent of employers reported that paid family and medical leave had either a "positive effect" or "no noticeable effect" on productivity, profitability/ performance, turnover, and employee morale.¹ Not having paid family and medical leave puts our businesses at a competitive disadvantage compared to businesses in states that do.

We need paid family and medical leave for a simple reason: hardworking people shouldn't have to choose between working at the job they need to pay the bills and caring for themselves or the family they love in a time of crisis.

To get involved in our grassroots movement, go to www.raiseupma.org



Our Priorities

Raise Up Massachusetts is a grassroots coalition of community organizations, religious groups, and labor unions committed to building an economy that works for all of us. An economy that invests in families, gives everyone the opportunity to succeed, and creates broadly shared prosperity.

We are united to ensure Massachusetts continues to be a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Whether motivated by our democratic values or our religious faith or both, we recognize that our fates are connected, we are one community, and we all do better when we all do better. We reject efforts to divide our communities and scapegoat the most vulnerable among us.

We work to pass laws, through the Legislature or at the ballot box, that support working families with jobs that pay a living wage and policies that allow them to balance work and family. To support important investments in our people and communities, we believe everyone should be asked to pay their fair share.

Our Story

Throughout 2013 and 2014, more than 150 organizations and hundreds of grassroots volunteers formed Raise Up Massachusetts and collected more than 350,000 signatures to put minimum wage and earned sick time on the ballot.

In June 2014, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed legislation raising the minimum wage from \$8 to \$11 over three years, avoiding the need for a ballot question. Raise Up Massachusetts then led the campaign to ensure access to earned sick time for all workers in the Commonwealth by passing Question 4 in November 2014.

In 2015 and 2016, Raise Up Massachusetts passed a paid family and medical leave bill in the state Senate, fought to win a \$15 wage for working people as part of the national Fight for \$15 movement, and collected more than 157,000 signatures and won the first of two votes by the full state Legislature needed to advance our Fair Share Amendment towards the 2018 ballot.

Our Agenda

This year, Raise Up Massachusetts is focusing on winning three issues of critical importance to working families in Massachusetts:

Paid Family and Medical Leave will ensure that Massachusetts workers are not forced to choose between work and their own health needs or the well-being of their children and other family members.

A \$15 Minimum Wage will make sure that anyone who works at a job full-time earns a wage they can live on, so they can afford groceries, housing, heating and other basic needs and support their families.

The Fair Share Amendment will invest in quality public schools, affordable higher education, a transportation system that works, and high-quality early childhood education by creating an additional tax of four percentage points on annual income above one million dollars.

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