



April 16, 2019

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 196 – 100% Paid Family Leave – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblywoman Gonzalez:

On behalf of California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) I am writing in support of Assembly Bill 196 (Gonzalez), which would ensure workers utilizing the state's Paid Family Leave (PFL) program can receive full wage replacement during the period of their leave.

CFPA is a statewide policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. For over twenty-five years, we have advocated for improved access and participation in the federal nutrition programs including CalFresh, school meal programs, WIC, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. We know that the basic costs of raising a family in California often far exceed the annual income of full-time working parents. With limited resources, low-income families are commonly forced to make tough decisions between basic necessities, like food and medicine. California should do all it can to support low-income families, especially those with caretaker responsibilities.

Paid family leave allows workers to avoid choosing between being present at home to care for their families in times of need or working to make ends meet. Providing workers with access to paid family leave ensures that they are able to take extended leave to care for a new child, recover from a serious illness, or care for an ill family member, while continuing to retain a portion of their wages.

It's clear that current rates of wage replacement in California are still too low for workers who survive paycheck-to-paycheck to make use of this benefit. Working mothers are disproportionately harmed by this gap in our state's PFL program. This is evident by the fact that one in four mothers feel that they have no choice but to return to their jobs within a mere two weeks of giving birth to make ends meet, despite the dire emotional and physical consequences mothers face when they return to work too soon. However, opting out of the labor force without a guarantee of 100 percent income replacement is

not an option for most Latina, Native American and Black single mothers when they are facing the pressures of being the family's sole provider. Moreover, single mothers of color working low-wage jobs have the highest need for 100 percent income replacement because they are also balancing the role of primary caregiver for their loved ones.

Research has clearly demonstrated that accessible paid family leave improves both infant and maternal mental and physical health, in addition to lowering barriers for families to meet their relatives' caregiving needs. AB 196 would ensure paid family leave is a benefit that's accessible for all workers by guaranteeing 100 percent wage replacement. Expanding California's Paid Family Leave program will help ensure all working families benefit from the long-term health outcomes associated with the ability to take adequate leave in times of need, without sacrificing their livelihood.

CFPA thanks you for your leadership in authoring this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jared Call". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Jared Call, Managing Policy Advocate
California Food Policy Advocates