

# Building a Movement for Family-Friendly Workplace Policies

## NC Families Care Coalition

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NORTH CAROLINA

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## What are Family-Friendly Workplace Policies?

Policies that allow working people to care for themselves and their families without forcing them to choose between the paycheck they need and their own well-being or being there for the people they love.

Examples of  
Family-Friendly  
Workplace  
Policies include:

Paid Family and Medical Leave

Earned Paid Sick Days (including kin care and  
safe days)

Pregnancy and Lactation Accommodations

Fair Scheduling and Flexible Work

You shouldn't have to  
win the "Boss Lottery"  
to take care of  
yourself and your  
loved ones:

*The Public Policy Case for  
Family-Friendly Workplace  
Policies*



# Strong and Growing Movement in North Carolina

Engaging a broad, cross-issue movement is key:

- \* NC Families Care Coalition
- \* Essentials for Childhood
- \* Think Babies NC Alliance
- \* NC Violence Prevention Coordinating Team
- \* NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- \* NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- \* NC Council of Churches
- \* NC Coalition on Aging
- \* Caregiving Collaborative



# Earned Paid Sick Days, Kin Care, and Safe Days

In NC, 1.6 million workers – roughly 38 percent of our state’s workforce – have **ZERO** paid sick days.



For a typical family without paid sick days, on average, **3.3 days of pay lost due to illness are equivalent to the family’s entire monthly health care budget, and 2.7 days are equivalent to its entire monthly grocery budget.**

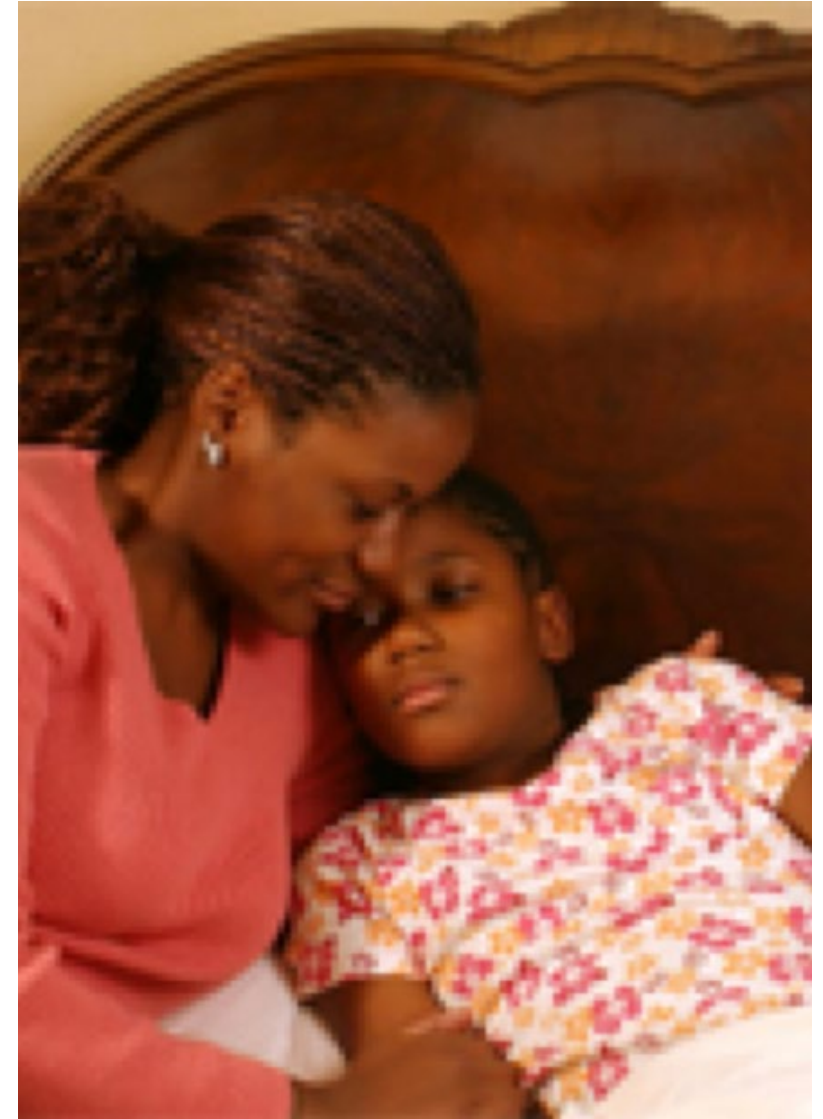
An infographic with a light blue background and a sunburst pattern. At the top, the text reads "EARNED SICK TIME = A WIN-WIN-WIN FOR WORKING FAMILIES, BUSINESSES, AND THE ECONOMY". Below the text, there are three illustrations: a family (a woman, a man, and a child) walking, a storefront with a sign that says "SHOP LOCAL" and a red and white striped awning, and a bar chart with a red arrow pointing upwards, indicating economic growth. At the bottom, the text reads "MomsRising.org | MamásConPoder.org".

**EARNED SICK TIME = A WIN-WIN-WIN FOR WORKING FAMILIES, BUSINESSES, AND THE ECONOMY**

MomsRising.org | MamásConPoder.org

# Who has access to PAID sick days?

- **Nationwide, 1 in 5 workers doesn't have access** to paid sick days. 21% of workers cannot earn a single paid sick day.
- Many more can't earn paid sick time they can use to **care for a sick child** or family member or take them to **access preventative care**.
- Nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$  of US adults (23 percent) have **lost a job or been threatened** with job loss for taking time off due to illness or to care for a sick child or relative.
- **Nearly half (48 percent) of Latinx workers** and more than **one-third (36 percent) of Black workers** report having no paid time away from work.
- One-quarter to one-half of **domestic violence survivors report losing a job** in part due to the violence.



# Sick Days, Kin Care, and Safe Days

**Sick Days**-Time earned off from work, whether paid or job-protected unpaid, for an employee to use to recover from a short-term illness or injury. Sometimes can be expanded to include sickness / wellbeing needs of employees' family, to access preventative care, or for other well-being related needs

**Kin Care**-Explicitly says that whatever kind of sick leave an employee earns it can be used to care for a family member. May also expand to include accessing preventative care or other needs

**Safe Days**-Explicitly says that whatever kind of sick leave an employee earns it can be used to deal with the physical, emotional, or legal impacts of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking or to seek safety.







## Health and Safety Benefits to Children

Paid sick leave is a primary factor in a parent's decision to **stay home when their child is sick.**

Lack of access to affordable childcare for sick children means without access to paid sick days or sick days that can be used for family members, sick children are often **left home alone sick or sent to school or childcare sick.**

Allowing parents to stay home **prevents spread of illness.**

Allows parents to address children's health needs such as managing **health complications or disabilities, well-child visits, vaccinations.**

**9,490 NC children affected by domestic violence and 3,040 by sexual assault** each year. Caregivers need time off to address the physical, mental, and legal impacts of these incidents.



## NC Healthy Families and Workplaces Act/ Paid Sick Days (HB 817)

**What it does:** would guarantee all NC workers the right to earn one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked; up to 4 days per year for employees of small businesses and employees of large businesses up to 7 days per year.

**Sponsors:** T. Brown, Harrison, Crawford, G. Brown

**Status:** Did not cross-over

# The Healthy Families Act (Federal)

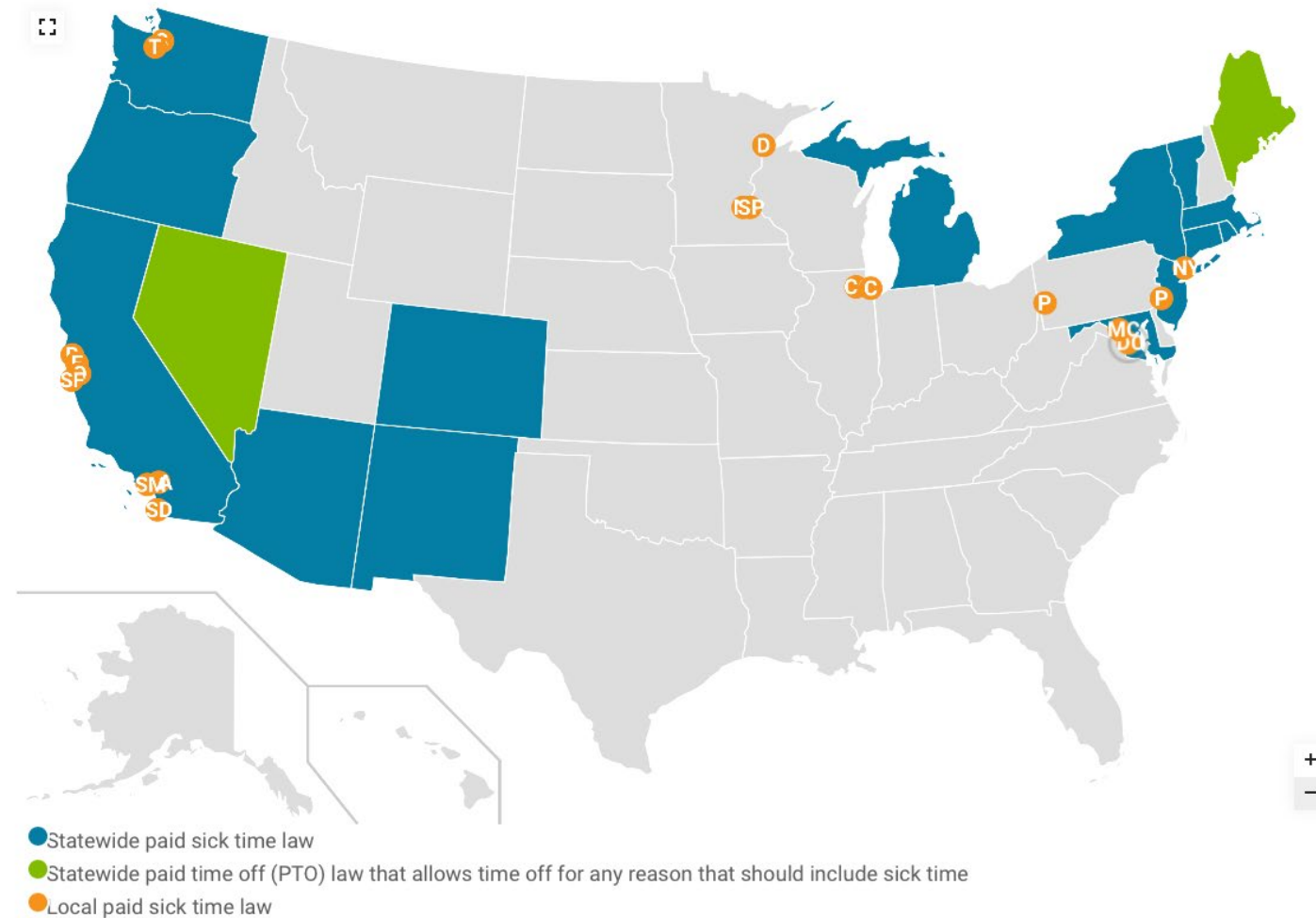
**The Healthy Families Act would set a national paid sick days standard – a critical step toward meeting the health and financial needs of working families.**

- Allow workers in businesses with 15 or more employees **to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days each year** Workers in businesses with fewer than 15 employees would earn up to seven job-protected *unpaid* sick days each year to be used for the same reasons, unless their employers choose to offer paid sick days.
- Allow workers who are **survivors of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault** to use their paid sick days to recover or seek assistance related to an incident.
- **Allow employers to require certification** if an employee uses more than three paid sick days in a row. For survivors of domestic violence, the certification may be from a law enforcement officer or survivor advocate.
- **Allow employers to use their existing policies**, as long as they meet the minimums set forth in the Healthy Families Act

# Paid Sick Days Action in the States

14 states, the District of Columbia, and twenty-two jurisdictions nationwide have passed paid sick days laws.

(Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington)



## Executive Directive on Safe Days

On October 23, 2019, Gov. Cooper signed an **Executive Directive** allowing sick leave to be used as safe days for state employees under his purview.



## Paid Sick Days

- To stay home and recover from a short-term illness, like the common cold
- Access preventative care
- Care for a sick child or family member
- Attend school meetings related to a child's health condition or disability
- Allow survivors of domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault (or their close family member) to use paid sick time to recover or seek assistance related to an incident

*\*Note-Kin Care/ Safe Days as described in proposal before CFTF expands who paid or unpaid, job-protected sick days can be used to care for and the purposes for which they can be used*

## Paid Family & Medical Leave

- To address a serious personal health condition, like cancer, that requires longer-term care or treatment
- Care for a family member with a serious health condition
- Care for a newborn, newly adopted child, or newly-placed foster child
- Care for a family member injured in military service or to deal with exigencies of military deployment
- The length is adequate to cover the full range of personal medical and family caregiving needs established in the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

**Paid Sick Days and Paid Family and Medical Leave:  
How They are Different and Why We Need Both**

*What do the United States and Papua New Guinea have in common?*

They are the only countries in the world without paid family leave.

American families are often forced to choose between tending to a spouse or parent with an unexpected medical emergency, or keeping their job and health insurance.



# Paid Family and Medical Leave

The primary law in the US dealing with longer-term medical and family caregiving needs is the **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** – which turns 30 this year!

*FMLA has been used over 460 million times in the last 30 years!*



The FMLA provides eligible workers with up to **12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave** to:

- Bond with a new child
- Care for a seriously ill or injured spouse, parent or child
- Address their own health condition

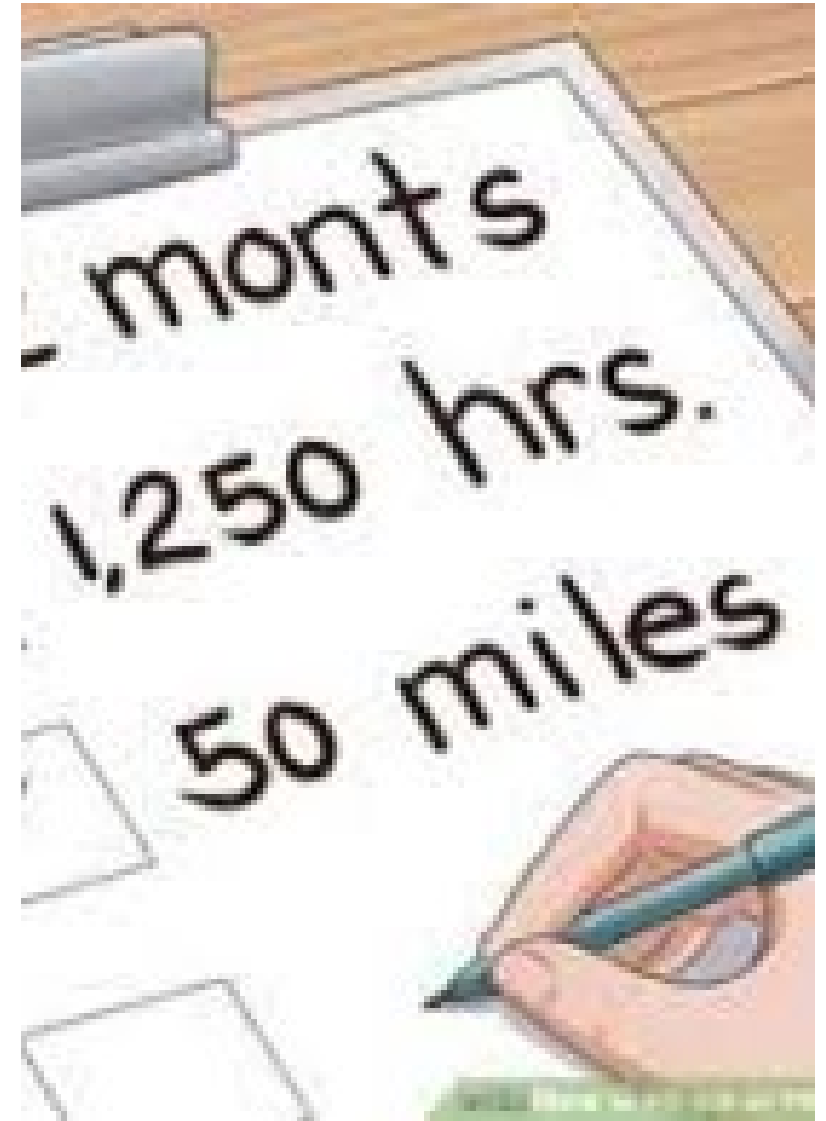
**Twenty-six weeks** to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness



# Who is eligible for the FMLA?

In order to be eligible to take leave under the FMLA, an employee must:

- \* have worked 1,250 hours during the 12 months prior to the start of leave;
- \* work at a location where the employer has 50 or more employees within 75 miles; and
- \* have worked for the employer for 12 months. The 12 months of employment are not required to be consecutive in order for the employee to qualify for FMLA leave. In general, only employment within seven years is counted unless the break in service is (1) due to an employee's fulfillment of military obligations, or (2) governed by a collective bargaining agreement or other written agreement.



Only 56 percent of the U.S. workforce is protected by the FMLA, leaving out workers at smaller employers, people who work one or multiple part-time jobs, and those reentering the workforce who either lost their jobs or had to quit due to caregiving responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those not covered are disproportionately low-wage workers: Only 38 percent of low-wage workers are covered by the FMLA, compared with 63 percent of non-low-wage workers

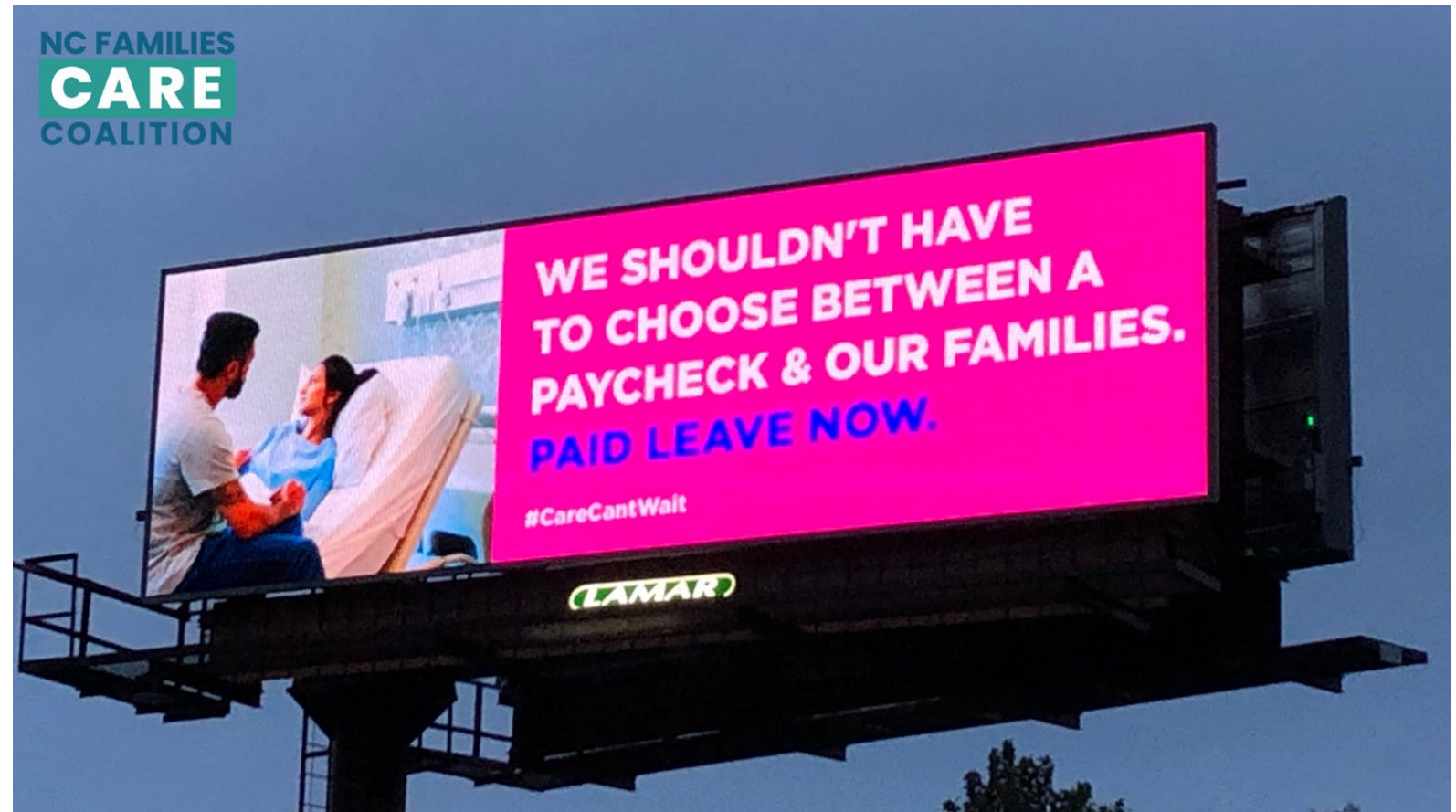
And millions of those who are eligible can't afford to take paid leave.

#FMLA30



The ability to take PAID leave is key.

Nearly half of those who were FMLA-eligible and needed leave but didn't take it cited lack of pay as the reason.



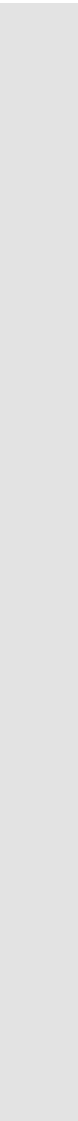
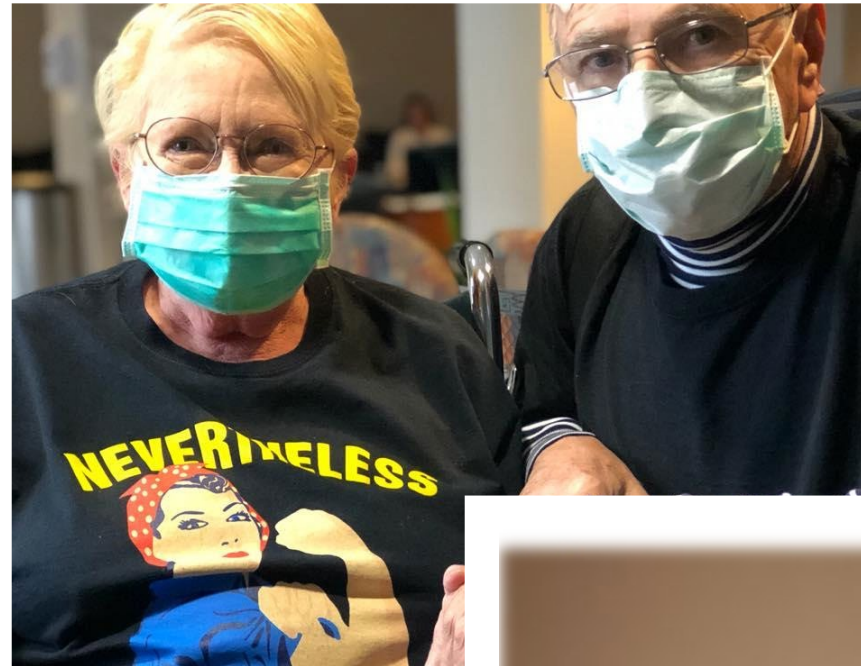
# What 's at Stake?

**1 in 4 mothers go back to work within 2 weeks of birth** unable to establish breastfeeding, continue bonding, and heal from birth.

**Lack of paid family leave further widens the pay gap and can drive families into poverty, creating stress.** Paid family leave provides economic security.

**More than 1.4 million North Carolina households include a person aged 65 or older,** and it's expected that this population will double by 2050, as the Baby Boom generation moves into retirement.

**In North Carolina, almost 1.2 million people are caregivers for their own family members suffering from chronic illnesses.** About 9 in 10 adults living at home with a physical, cognitive, or chronic health condition rely on unpaid family caregivers as their main source of help with everyday activities.



# We need paid family and medical leave that is:

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**Accessible** to all workers

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Offers a **meaningful** length of leave and wage replacement

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**Affordable** for workers, employers and the government

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**Inclusive** in defining family

# Duke Center for Child and Family Policy Study

The research projected that a program offering **twelve weeks leave with 80% wage replacement** would:

- **save 26 infant lives** in North Carolina each year – a 3 percent drop in our state’s currently abysmal infant mortality rate!
- **keep 205 individuals out of nursing home care** each year, cutting costs by between \$16.7 million and \$18.6 million
- **reduce the number of individuals needing public assistance** through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program by 956, saving \$451,232 to \$780,096 in North Carolina’s TANF costs annually;
- **provide meaningful support for families addressing a loved one’s opioid or other substance abuse addiction.**

12 Weeks at 80% Wage Replacement

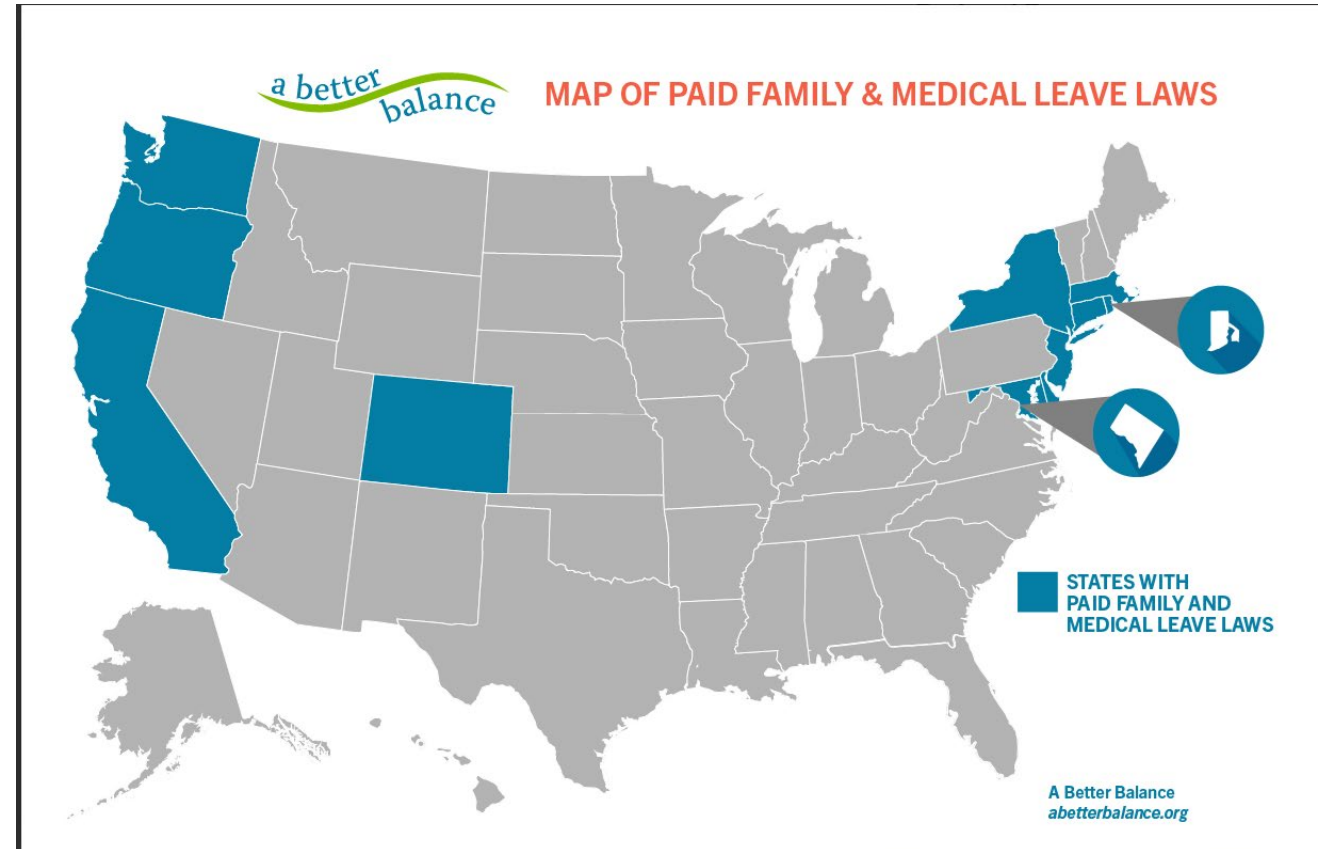


A 2019 **study from the Duke Center for Child and Family Policy** found that a paid family and medical leave insurance program in North Carolina would reduce infant mortality, nursing home costs, and use of government assistance.

# Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance

Government programs that allow people to receive a portion of their pay when they need time away from their jobs for family or medical reasons.

At the federal level, this bill is called the **FAMILY Act**.



Eleven states plus DC have passed paid family and medical leave laws: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington state, along with Washington, D.C.

# NC Paid Family Leave Insurance Act (SB 418)

- **What it does:** establishes a paid family and medical leave insurance program which would allow working people to access
  - up to 12 weeks of paid time off to care for family member or welcome new baby;
  - up to 18 weeks of paid time for worker's own serious health condition;
  - up to 26 weeks to care for family member who incurred an injury or illness in the armed services
- **Sponsors:** Batch, Meyer, Salvador
- **Status:** Did not cross-over

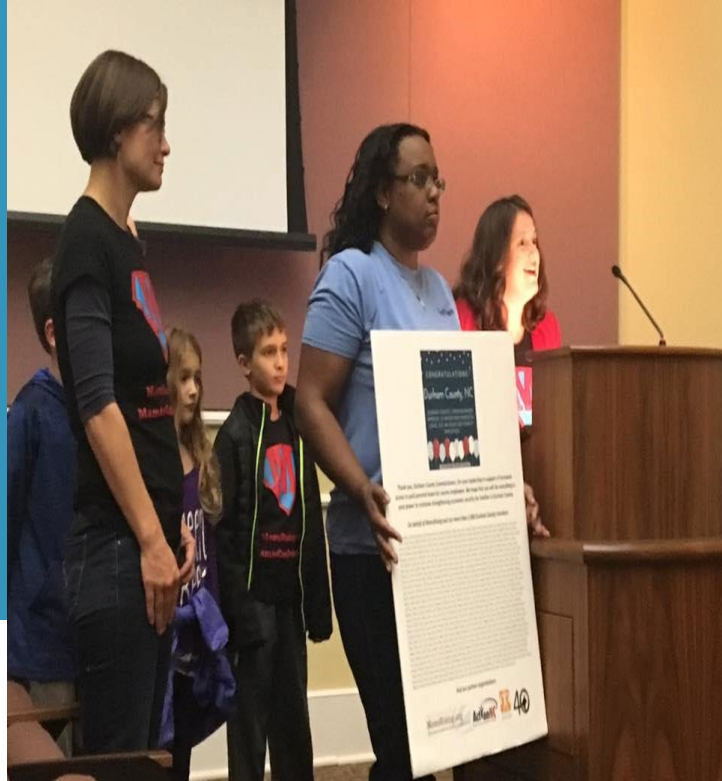


In North Carolina, advocates are working hard to win paid leave at the local, state, and federal levels.



# Starting Local!

*24 local governments and counting have passed policies providing paid parental or family leave to their employees – and early adopters are expanding!*



CONGRATULATIONS!

## Apex, NC

THANK YOU, APEX TOWN COUNCIL,  
FOR APPROVING  
6 WEEKS PAID PARENTAL LEAVE  
FOR TOWN EMPLOYEES

[MomsRising.org](http://MomsRising.org) / [MamasConPoder.org](http://MamasConPoder.org)

CONGRATULATIONS!

## Hillsborough, NC

HILLSBOROUGH BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS APPROVES 6 WEEKS  
PAID PARENTAL LEAVE FOR TOWN  
EMPLOYEES

[MomsRising.org](http://MomsRising.org) / [MamasConPoder.org](http://MamasConPoder.org)

CONGRATULATIONS!

## Morrisville, NC

MORRISVILLE TOWN COUNCIL  
APPROVES 6 WEEKS PAID PARENTAL  
LEAVE FOR TOWN EMPLOYEES

# Paid Leave in NC

**Executive Order 95**-Issued by Gov. Cooper in 2019 providing paid parental leave to state employees under his purview.

Now also voluntarily covering: Office of Administrative Hearings, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Office of the Commissioner of Banks, Office of the Secretary of State, Office of the State Auditor, Office of the State Controller, Department of Public Instruction, Department of Justice and The Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Labor



## 2021 PAID PARENTAL LEAVE REPORT

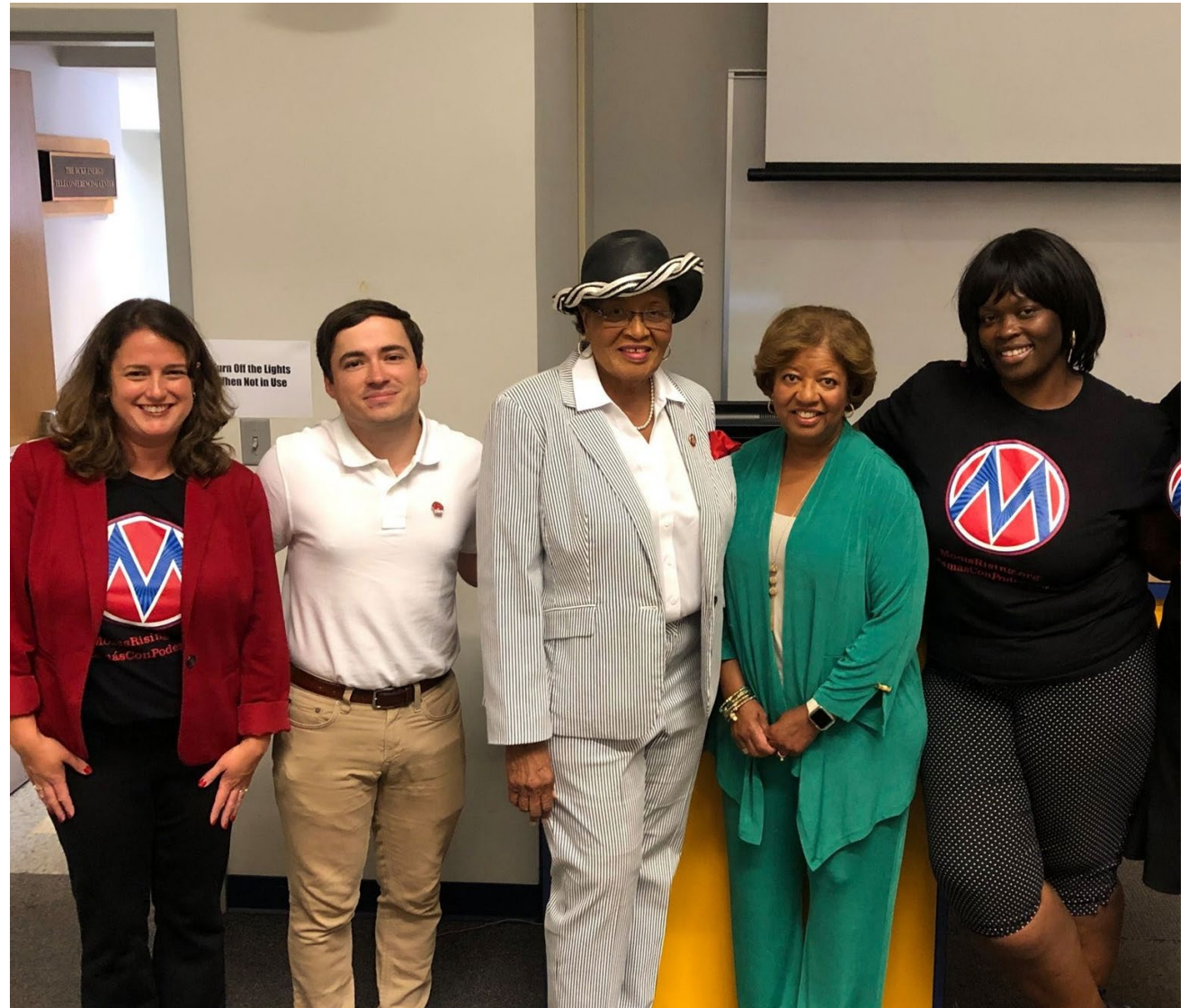


NORTH CAROLINA Office of  
**State Human Resources**



# Federal Movement for Paid Leave

- **FMLA** passed in 1993-unpaid, most people don't qualify or can't afford to take it
- Renewed bipartisan recognition that something must be done
- **FAMILY Act**-family medical leave insurance model built off what's happened in the states with bipartisan support
- **Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA)**
- **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)**
- 4 weeks paid family and medical leave included in the **Build Back Better Act** which passed the House in 2021, but stalled in the Senate
- Reintroduction of the **FAMILY Act**



# Two HUGE victories!

**Pregnant Worker Fairness Act** guarantees workers the right to reasonable accommodations for pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions. This includes things like being able to carry a water bottle, sit on stool, have more bathroom breaks, request temporary light duty. It goes into effect on June 27, 2023.

**Under the Break Time for Nursing Mothers Law, as updated by the PUMP Act, employers of ALL sizes are required to provide a reasonable amount of break time and a clean, private space for lactating workers to express milk** for up to one year following the birth of the employee's child. The pumping space cannot be a bathroom. These protections apply regardless of the employee's gender. This went into effect on December 29, 2022.

**VICTORY!**  
**THE PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT & THE PUMP FOR NURSING MOTHERS ACT JUST PASSED!**

Thank you to all who took action, raised a voice, and made this happen!



**NC FAMILIES**  
**CARE**  
**COALITION**



**NORTH CAROLINA**  
**JUSTICE**  
**CENTER**

## Questions?

Clermont Ripley, North Carolina Justice Center, Workers' Rights Project Co-Director

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