

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 8, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

Thank you for your continuing leadership in mobilizing our nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend you for steering to passage the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which included emergency paid sick leave and emergency family leave for many working parents, as well as additional funding for pregnant women and mothers with infants, who are more susceptible to contracting infectious diseases. The COVID-19 crisis has exacted a devastating mental, emotional and economic toll on families across America, and the levels of stress and anxiety are especially overwhelming for our constituents who are pregnant and praying for safety during this pandemic.

Beginning on October 1, 2020, 2.1 million federal workers will finally obtain access to paid parental leave benefits. We can be proud that, as our nation's largest employer, the federal government is setting an example by implementing paid parental leave for federal employees covered by Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provisions. It was President Trump who, on December 20, 2019, signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY2020), which specifically provides 12 weeks of paid parental leave for our federal workers¹.

This is a great achievement. But the October 1, 2020 start date for paid parental leave actually leaves out tens of thousands of federal workers who are pregnant now and expecting before October 1, as well as others who have recently welcomed a new baby. It may seem like a small thing as we enact trillion-dollar relief packages, but in this public health crisis, all affected federal workers should be able to take advantage of our new paid parental leave policy. We respectfully ask that you work with us to extend paid parental leave coverage to all covered and eligible federal workers in connection with a birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child that occurs between December 20, 2019, and October 1, 2020. This would guarantee that all federal workers covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) would be able to properly care for their newborn or newly adopted children.

We have heard recently from numerous pregnant federal workers who face an array of complex challenges, like not being able to count on family and friends for child care assistance because of social distancing, not being able to find safe and appropriate paid child care in the crisis, and navigating difficult or cancelled doctor visits. Let us give these people the same support we are

¹ <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/paid-parental-leave-federal-employees>

offering their colleagues. It has been shown that workers who are able to take paid parental leave are more productive and in better health when they return². Better child and parental health also means fewer emergency medical visits and a lighter burden on our already beleaguered health care system.

While our nation fights to drive down incidence of the disease, more than 10,000 federal employees have already tested positive for COVID-19³. The spread of this deadly virus and the rampant uncertainty about its associated risks are extremely stressful for expectant parents.

We appreciate your leadership in responding to the many dimensions of this national public health emergency and economic crisis. Please help us address this one discrete and eminently solvable problem. Thank you for your consideration of this matter of pressing importance to many of our federal workers.

Very truly yours,

<u>/s/</u> _____	<u>/s/</u> _____	<u>/s/</u> _____	<u>/s/</u> _____
Jamie Raskin	Carolyn Maloney	Gerald E. Connolly	Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress	Member of Congress	Member of Congress	Member of Congress

<u>/s/</u> _____	<u>/s/</u> _____	<u>/s/</u> _____	<u>/s/</u> _____
Dutch Ruppersberger	Donald S. Beyer Jr.	John P. Sarbanes	Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress	Member of Congress	Member of Congress	Member of Congress

<u>/s/</u> _____	<u>/s/</u> _____	<u>/s/</u> _____	<u>/s/</u> _____
David Trone	Sean Casten	Brenda Lawrence	Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress	Member of Congress	Member of Congress	Member of Congress

² https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/646d2340-dcd4-4614-ada9-be5b1c3f445c/jec-fact-sheet---economic-benefits-of-paid-leave.pdf

³ <https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2020/04/more-10000-federal-employees-have-contracted-covid-19/164986/>