

Date

Your Name

Address

City, State, Zip code

Email address

Phone Number

The Honorable *(Name of representative)*

House of Representatives *or* United States Senate Office *or* *(State)* House of Representatives *or* *(State)*  
Senate

Office Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Representative/Senator *(Name of representative)*,

Join the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) in supporting paid parental leave in *(insert state)*. As a medical student at *(insert medical school)*, I am concerned about the ongoing struggle facing patients and their children who lack an adequate amount of bonding time after birth or adoption.

About 13% of U.S. employees have paid family leave and the lack in the others places a strain on families which extends beyond the obvious financial fallout and into the health of both the children and parents.

Tangible examples of the hardships placed on parents and children include:

- Adequate parental bonding with newborns is critical for the psychological development of children and affects how secure they feel in their environments throughout their lives.
- Parents spending more time with their newborns has been shown to decrease infant mortality.
- Breastfeeding promotes a healthy immune system in infants and can help prevent the development of asthma, otitis media, autoimmune disorders, neurodevelopmental problems, gastrointestinal problems, and SIDS.
- Mothers who feel rushed to return to work have an increased incidence of depressive symptoms and report fewer positive interactions with their infants than those who had adequate bonding.
- Mothers who take less leave know less about their infant's development than mothers with more time off, and they report a negative impact on their own self-esteem and marital relationships.
- Mothers with paid maternity leave work 20% more upon their return. than those with no paid leave.

The financial impact that a new child has on the family economy makes paid leave a necessity. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is not sufficient as it provides only unpaid time off. Many working parents cannot afford to take unpaid time off. Living paycheck to paycheck, working women are earning a higher percentage of the family income than at any time in history. This means that every day a woman takes off work is another day that she borrows money, burns through savings, or relies on public assistance or food stamps to support her family. This financial hardship hits minorities and single women especially hard, further perpetuating the socioeconomic disparities that plague our communities.

There is a solution to this. You can help make *(insert state)* a groundbreaker in supporting this nation's new parents and their children. You can propose and support legislature to provide paid leave to all parents—just as California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island have already done. You can help the United States join the rest of the world in providing paid parental leave—a move that is crucial to the health, well-being, and financial stability of parents, children, and the state of *(insert state)*.

Sincerely,

(Signature)  
(Typed Name)