



National Federation of Federal Employees, IAMAW, AFL-CIO



Support the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act (H.R. 626/S. 354)

Position:

The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009 (FEPPLA) would grant federal employees four weeks of paid parental leave when caring for a newly born or adopted child. Currently, federal employees are not given any paid leave during this time. Under current law, new parents are only allowed up to 12 weeks of *unpaid* leave and may use their annual and sick leave to supplement the lost wages. NFFE-IAM supports FEPPLA because federal employees should not have to choose between bringing home a paycheck and caring for their newly born or adopted child.

Background:

The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009 (H.R. 626/S. 354) would amend Title 5 of the United States Code, the Congressional Accountability Act, and the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) by creating a new category of leave under FMLA. This new category would provide four weeks of paid leave to federal employees following the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child. In addition, the legislation would allow the Office of Personnel Management to increase the amount of paid leave to a total of eight weeks, based on consideration of several factors such as the cost to the federal government and enhanced recruitment and retention of valuable employees.

Under current law, federal employees who have completed at least 12 months of service are entitled to 12 weeks of leave without pay after the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child. Upon return from such FMLA leave, an employee must be returned to the same position or to an “equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, status, and other terms and conditions of employment.” Employees may get paid during that 12-week period if they use annual or sick leave they have accrued. The leave provided by this bill would be available only within the 12-week FMLA leave period.

Why Support the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act?

- The federal government currently provides no paid parental leave to its workforce, whereas this is a common benefit in most sectors of the economy.
- The parental leave benefit in the federal government is weak compared to other sectors of employment with which the federal government must compete for labor.
- The federal government needs to be a family friendly employer in order to recruit and retain the nation’s best and brightest workforce.
- With retiring baby boomers, over half the federal workforce will be leaving the civil service in the coming years. With federal pay lagging more than 20 percent below the private sector, it is more important than ever for the federal government to provide a benefits package that will attract the next generation of civil servants.
- With a slumping economy, federal employees are increasingly unable to afford the option of taking unpaid leave after the birth of a child. This puts some federal employees in the unenviable position of having to delay starting a family because of the financial hardship associated with lost wages.
- Four weeks of paid parental leave is a modest benefit that any model employer should provide its employees.