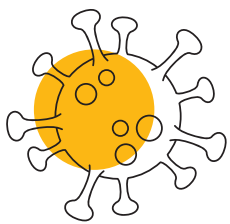




Workers in TEXAS DESERVE PAID LEAVE

The 1,000 Days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday offer a critical window of opportunity to build better, healthier futures. Research shows that paid leave can improve the health of mothers and babies, promote breastfeeding and enable children to get a strong start to life. However, far too many American workers, especially low-wage working women and women of color, do not have access to paid family and medical leave. A lack of paid parental leave disrupts women's connections to the labor force and their employer, often leading to financial hardships and career disruptions. Paid leave allows parents, particularly mothers, to avoid having to choose between caring for their families and preserving or gaining financial stability. Making paid leave universally available is especially helpful for women of color, women with less education and unmarried women to be able to afford to take the leave they need while working in jobs that may not offer more benefits.



The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the need for paid leave and the disparities in who has access to it. Many essential workers are also low-wage workers, which means they have less access to affordable, quality health care. Many of these workers are unable to take paid time off from their job, and in the age of a viral pandemic, that threatens public health and community well-being.

Paid leave saves lives.

- The maternal mortality rate in Texas is among the highest in the nation, with the CDC reporting **31.5 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2016**.
- **In 2017, Texas's infant mortality rate was 5.5 per 1,000 live births**, meaning 2,083 infants died before their first birthday, according to the CDC.
- The CDC estimates that **700 women die every year** in the U.S. from pregnancy-related complications.
- **Providing 12 weeks of paid leave** in the U.S. could result in **nearly 600 fewer infant deaths per year**.
- A study of leave-taking in the U.S. found at 21 months postpartum infants had a **47 percent reduction in re-hospitalization** when mothers took paid maternity leave.



Paid leave is a public health imperative.

- Many workers must patch together time off by taking **sick leave, vacation, short-term disability, unpaid leave or a combination thereof.**
- Women in the U.S. are **working later into their pregnancies** and **returning to work earlier after childbirth** than previous generations.
- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2018 a mere **17 percent of workers had paid leave provided by their employers.**
- **Only 5 percent** of the low-wage workers, who earn an average wage of \$10.28 per hour, **have access to paid time off to attend to their medical or family caregiving needs.**
- **The length of leave a woman is able to take matters for her health.** In a nationally-representative sample of U.S. women who returned to work in the first year after childbirth, women with less than eight weeks of paid leave had a lower overall health status than those with longer leaves.



We conducted multiple, in-depth interviews with four low-income women in Texas throughout their pregnancy and postpartum period. Each of these women, who vary in age, race, marital status, educational attainment and occupation, have one key thing in common: they do not have access to paid family and medical leave. Here's what they had to say.



“I would have loved to have the luxury of being able to stay at home for the whole year, but unfortunately, due to financial reasons I had to go back.”

“I've gotten a lot of feedback that I should be at home with my baby. That a lot of them took time off until their baby was like one or two years old.”



“I started [back] working there, and I worked there for about two weeks, and then, just because of the situation with my kids and the environment at the daycare, I wasn't feeling safe with my kids being there... I put in my notice and I said I'm not coming back.”

1,000 Days is the leading non-profit advocacy organization working to ensure women and children in the U.S. and around the world have a healthy first 1,000 days.



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