

NOW MORE THAN EVER: SUPPORT MAIN STREET PASS PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

Small business owners need a national paid family and medical leave program. With Covid surging and Main Street pushed to the brink, paid leave is not an extra – it’s essential to the survival of our country’s 30 million small businesses and the health of small business owners, employees, and customers alike.

Federal lawmakers must extend and strengthen the Families First Coronavirus Response Act’s (FFCRA) pandemic-related paid leave measures (as in the HEROES Act) and create a robust permanent program (like the FAMILY Act). These steps will make Main Street stronger in all our communities -- rural, urban, and suburban; white, Black, and brown -- all across the country.

THE FACTS: PAID LEAVE STRENGTHENS SMALL BUSINESSES



Paid leave contributes to **reduced turnover** and **higher employee moral and loyalty**, leading to productivity increases and **significant costs savings** for small businesses.



Evaluations of existing state programs demonstrate leave programs **don’t increase costs** for small businesses and **implementation is manageable**.



Paid leave laws help **level the playing field** between small businesses and large corporations, allowing small businesses to **compete on more equal footing**.



Families First (FFCRA) is **critical to COVID relief** for small businesses. Owners **prefer a policy on paid family/medical leave and sick days over liability protections** by a 2-to-1 margin.



Paid leave **dollars go back into the local economy**, boosting consumer demand at small businesses, as working people spend their leave to cover basics.

THE SMALL BUSINESS CASE FOR PAID LEAVE

More than ever, small businesses and their employees need a program that allows owners and workers to take time from work for health reasons – whether to care for themselves and/or their loved ones or to quarantine or isolate and avoid spreading Covid. Multiple studies point to the public health benefits of paid sick time protections when it comes to combating contagious diseases. The paid sick leave provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act have been shown to reduce Covid infections by about 400 confirmed cases a day in states that did not have paid sick leave before the pandemic.



Dan Swenson Klatt, Butter Bakery, Minneapolis, MN:

We’ve had three employees use these paid days for child care. One of them also used some paid sick days as well. Small businesses like mine will need this continued support for the duration of the health crisis. We should strengthen these programs and make sure they don’t expire in December.

Big businesses can afford paid leave – small businesses can’t. Small businesses generally lack the capital and the scale to provide paid leave, even when owners want to provide that benefit. Moreover, private insurers generally do not offer affordable, adequate paid leave policies to small businesses. As a result, as of 2019 only 14 percent of workers in firms with 99 or fewer employees had access to employer-provided paid family leave, compared to 29 percent of workers in firms with 500 or more employees.

Paid Leave is a matter of racial equity for both Black- and brown-owned business owners and their employees. With higher rates of illness and death, and business closure, Black and brown communities have received minimal support to survive the disease. Additionally, workers of color have more limited access to paid leave while being more likely to care for family members. A robust, permanent paid family and medical leave program is essential for supporting Black- and brown-owned businesses, their employees, and the communities they serve.

GET IN TOUCH

For questions, please contact info@mainstreetalliance.org or find us on the web at mainstreetalliance.org



“We looked into the Family First Act’s paid leave and paid sick days programs from the beginning. For our business and for our employees, this has been a massively important tool to help keep us operating while putting our employees’ safety and public health first, as well as supporting our employees to help take care of their families.



Kate Davenport, Eureka Recycling, Minneapolis, MN

MAIN STREET BUSINESS ARE CLAMOURING FOR PAID LEAVE

- A Main Street Alliance survey of more than 1,700 small businesses showed widespread **support for paid family and medical leave, with 64 percent** -- including 78 percent of women and people of color -- supporting paid family and medical leave laws. The vast majority, 79 percent, said a social insurance program would help them the most to offer paid leave to their employees. Additionally, **76 percent view the funding of**



Tiffany Turner,
Adrift Hospitality, OR:

A program like this does exactly what it is supposed to do: incentivizes people to make the right decision rather than punish employers and employees for looking out for everyone’s health. We should build from this program to make it stronger and available to all.

such a program as a shared responsibility and support a joint employer and employee contribution model.

- Having a well-funded and functioning program already in place during the pandemic protected small businesses from the upfront costs of paid leave. Policymakers should reject misguided approaches that fail to provide the comprehensive medical and caregiving coverage, or that would cut programs like the child tax credit that many employees rely on. **Paid leave is crucial for the survival and resilience of the country’s small businesses** and our economy overall.

FAMILIES FIRST (FFCRA) - A KEY COMPONENT OF COVID RELIEF

Federal lawmakers must extend and strengthen the Families First Coronavirus Response Act’s (FFCRA) pandemic-related paid leave measures (as in the HEROES Act) and create a robust permanent program (like the FAMILY Act). These steps will help small business weather the pandemic, while helping level the playing field for small business by ensuring fairer competition with large corporations.

What is FFCRA? FFCRA provides fully reimbursable paid sick days and child care leave for small and medium sized employers whose employees are impacted by COVID-19.

Is it popular? Small businesses who have used the program are overwhelmingly positive, clamoring for the program to be extended, expanded and additional outreach made to small businesses - who remain largely unaware of the program.

Small businesses need paid leave to battle the ongoing pandemic: Multiple studies have pointed to the public health benefits of paid sick time protections when it comes to combating contagious diseases. The paid sick leave provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act have been shown to reduce Covid infections by about 400 confirmed cases a day in states that did not have paid sick leave before the pandemic. Given Covid’s long incubation period and the duration of the disease, paid leave will allow workers and business owners to protect themselves and others, contributing to efforts to suppress the disease.

What are we asking? We urge you to extend and expand **FFCRA** to provide fully reimbursed paid sick time and paid leave to small business employees and ensure these benefits are available to employees in companies of all sizes. Additionally, we urge you to pass legislation, such as the **FAMILY Act**, to create a permanent national paid leave social insurance program that will be there for small businesses and working families whenever they need it. We must never be unprepared for a crisis like this again.

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