

RESOLUTION 13

FREEDOM TO SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY

Work is a down payment on the freedom to spend time with our families. Unfortunately, that investment does not always pay off. Outdated workplace policies put working women in a particular bind, forcing them to make impossible choices between work, family and personal wellness. Women want new rules for an economy that works for all working people equally, and the freedom to build lives of value.

Women in the workplace have gained a great deal. Women compose 48% of the workforce and are the sole or primary breadwinner for 40% of families in the United States. Yet the majority of family responsibilities still rest on the shoulders of women and, too often, women put in a full day of work only to come home and clock in for a second shift.

In the past decade, there has been tremendous momentum at the state and local level, with millions of working people winning the freedom to take time to care for family, and *labor unions have been at the center of these wins*. The difference for union women is irrefutable. Our affiliates have joined or led coalitions for paid sick leave and paid family leave in nearly every state with active campaigns. Overall, states with higher union density are more likely to have paid sick leave, and paid family and medical leave laws.

Nonetheless, millions of workers are left out. Federal law guarantees up to 12 weeks of job-protected, unpaid leave, but only for about 60% of the workforce. Only a fraction of private-sector workers have access to paid family leave through their employers or employer-provided short-term disability insurance. As a result, about a quarter of working women return to work within two weeks of giving birth, sacrificing critical time for recovery and bonding with a new child. More than 41 million people do not have access to paid sick leave—time to recover from a short-term illness or care for a loved one who is ill—and there is no national sick leave standard. Workers in part-time and minimum wage jobs, two-thirds of whom are women, are the least likely to have paid sick days.

At the same time, the erosion of overtime protection and the 40-hour workweek in recent decades is having a disproportionate impact on working women. There is overwhelming evidence that overtime protection is effective in discouraging overly long work hours and giving working people the ability to spend more time away from work, and that reducing excessive working hours makes working people healthier and more productive. The Obama administration issued new rules to restore lost overtime protection and extend overtime eligibility to millions more people, disproportionately benefiting working women and workers of color. However, the current administration is preparing to weaken those protections.

Working people must come together to demand the freedom to spend time with our families.

Therefore, the AFL-CIO will strengthen its commitment to these policy issues. In deep partnership with advocates and affiliated unions, the AFL-CIO will launch a full-scale, multifaceted campaign at the national, state and local levels for the freedom to spend time with family.

The AFL-CIO will:

- Advocate for stronger overtime protections for working people at the federal and state level;
- Advocate for paid parental leave for all federal employees;
- Track and advocate for state legislation on paid family leave, paid sick leave, and fair and predictable schedules;
- Collect and advocate for model bargaining language that wins paid family leave and fair work schedules at the bargaining table;
- Analyze the impact of proposed policies on women, people of color and other disproportionately impacted groups;
- Promote model legislation for key campaigns;

- Provide the analytics and technical assistance that state and local central bodies need to run successful campaigns; and
- Craft campaign materials and messaging frameworks for the 2018 mid-term elections to leverage the freedom to spend time with family.