

# Dane County Executive Parisi: Announce Paid Parental Leave Initiative

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Today, as part of his 2018 Budget Dane County Executive Joe Parisi joined Dane County Board Members and advocates to announce a 10 week paid parental leave for Dane County Employees for the birth or adoption of a child. This new parental leave policy will ensure new moms and dads who work for Dane County have adequate time away to focus on their families while decreasing costly worker turnover. The County Executive urged other companies to join Dane County in offering paid parental leave.

“Few moments in life rival the genuine excitement and joy that come with welcoming a child into our lives,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “It’s important as families transition and grow that parents can savor those moments without worries about mounting responsibilities at work. I am urging other businesses and leaders in our community to join us in doing what is best for the workplace, for the workers and for our children.”

According to a 2013 Pew Research Center Report, the United States lags behind 37 other nations when it comes to providing paid maternity or paternity leave. Of the countries reviewed in the report, the United States is the only country that does not require paid time off and offers the fewest hours of protected time, the amount of

time where individuals are ensured they can return to a similar job.

Despite this, progress on offering paid parental leave is being made in the United States. In January 2015, President Obama issued a Presidential Memo directing the Federal Government to offer 240 hours of advance sick leave to employees in connection with the adoption or birth of a child, regardless of how much sick time an employee has accrued.

“Dane County is setting the standard and leading on paid family leave,” said Jeff Pertl Dane County Supervisor. “This is smart policy that keeps women in the workforce, reflects the changing role of dads in parenting, and helps close the gender pay gap. When my son was born, I was lucky to have enough sick and vacation time to take time off, but you shouldn’t have to be lucky to care for a new child. Paid family leave is another important way to support strong, health families and address the equity issues in our community.”

Offering parental leave has been shown to increase the likelihood that mothers return to their job after the birth of a child and improves the health and development outcomes of the baby, according to that 2015 Presidential Memo. It also lowers costly worker turnover, increases employee engagement and morale, and helps recruit and retain talent.

In the 2015 report “The Cost of Doing Nothing,” the U.S. Department of Labor found that 60% of workers without fully paid leave reported difficulty making ends meet and many reported putting off paying bills, drawing down savings and cutting leave short. According to the report, working fathers in the U.S. who took leaves of two weeks or more were much more likely to be actively involved in their child’s care nine months after birth than those who took shorter leaves.

The 2015 report found that increased access to paid maternity leave is linked to decreased infant mortality, increased birthweight, and a lowered chance of premature birth in international comparisons. Paid parental leave is a policy that more should embrace. It is better for the workplace, the parents and the baby.