

Main Street Alliance: Wisconsin small business owners, advocates and elected leaders demand to pass paid leave for all

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Today, Main Street Alliance of Wisconsin is **demanding** that Congress include paid leave for all in their final budget agreement as the bipartisan infrastructure package and Build Back Better budget gain momentum, joined by Gov. Evers, Lt. Gov Barnes, State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski, mayors from Madison, Green Bay, and Wausau, as well as leaders in the state legislature who have previously called for paid leave for all to be included in a final budget agreement (see below).

Paid leave saves jobs and boosts our economy. If we want to Build Back Better, paid leave has to be a part of our infrastructure.

We invest in roads and bridges because they enable us to go to work and hold onto our jobs, improve quality of life, and make the economy more productive. **We must invest in care for the same reasons.**

Paid leave and care policies will help the economy grow, keep families in their jobs, and attached to their benefits. It's a boost to both workers and businesses, and particularly women of color who have had the greatest job losses.

Passing paid leave with other care policies would yield millions of jobs, billions in wages, and trillions in GDP.

Let's get it done.

Members of Main Street Alliance, as well as staff, are available for comment.

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Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell:

We write to voice our support for President Biden and Vice President Harris’s commitment to national paid family and medical leave and to urge Congress to pass it in the American Families Plan. As leaders in our states, we know what access to paid leave—or more often the lack of it—has meant for working families, in times of national crisis and beyond. We urge you to pass a permanent paid family and medical leave program alongside other priorities that will make our economy more resilient and strong.

We represent hard-working people across this country who face impossible choices of how to care for themselves and their families, and we hear from them every day. Families who are struggling to pay rent. Small business owners who want to keep their employees healthy and connected to their jobs. We hear from health care professionals who are exhausted, working under some of the most difficult conditions of their careers, but continuing to provide much needed care in our communities. Families increasingly care for both children and aging parents without the support nearly every country in the world provides. Meanwhile, in a recent poll more than 90 percent of voters wanted paid family and medical leave included in a comprehensive plan to help families. This is not a partisan issue to them, but a critical protection for their economic security and quality of work and life. This is about family values.

Paid leave and care policies have the potential to help the economy grow and to

keep families in their jobs and attached to their benefits. It's a boost to both workers and businesses, and particularly the caregivers and women of color who have faced the greatest job losses. Even before the pandemic, workers and their families lost a combined [\\$22.5 billion](#) in wages each year due to a lack of paid family and medical leave. The lack of access to paid leave also leads to higher costs in unemployment, hospitalizations, and health care, and compounding financial losses. Meanwhile researchers recently studied the effects of women's employment and concluded that taking action before the end of the pandemic on policies for care and equity could add [\\$2.4 trillion](#) to U.S. GDP by 2030.

We remain one of the only countries in the world without a national paid leave policy, which has meant that many states have stepped up to fill that gap in our infrastructure. States that had paid leave programs in place when the pandemic hit were better prepared to support workers with critical protections; if we'd had a national policy, more lives and jobs would have been saved. As elected officials we know a national program should be a floor, not a ceiling. For years, states have led the way on paid family and medical leave, passing and implementing laws that have benefited workers across the country and have paved the way for a national paid leave that must coordinate with state and local efforts.

We all have a stake in ensuring people do not spread illness when they are sick and recovering, that no one ever has to choose between their family and their paycheck. We need a sustainable paid leave policy in place so that none of us are scrambling for piecemeal solutions when caregiving needs arise or a crisis strikes.

As Governor of Wisconsin, Lt. Gov of Wisconsin, State Treasurer, Mayors and legislators, we have led our communities alongside you through some of the most difficult times in people's lives. We have the opportunity now to build back better with policies that will prepare us for future crises and transform people's everyday lives. We urge you to finally pass paid family and medical leave in the United States and to consider the states your partners in that endeavor.

Sincerely,

100+ Small Business owners across Wisconsin

Governor Tony Evers

Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes

State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski

Madison Mayor Satya-Rhodes Conway

Green Bay Mayor Eric Genrich

Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson

Wausau Mayor Katie Rosenberg

Viroqua Mayor Karen Mischel

Sen. Kelda Roys

Sen. Chris Larson

Sen. Melissa Agard

Rep. Kristina Shelton

Rep. Sara Rodriguez

Rep. Lisa Subeck

Rep. Lee Snodgrass

Rep. Greta Neubauer

Rep. Robyn Vining

Rep. Francesca Hong

Rep. Mark Spreitzer

Rep. Dora Drake

Rep. Jodi Emerson

Rep. David Bowen

Rep. Katrina Shankland

Rep. Jimmy Anderson

Rep. Lakeisha Myers

Rep. Jonathan Brostoff

Rep. Samba Baldeh

Main Street Alliance-Wisconsin

Opportunity Wisconsin

PRAWN

9 to 5 Wisconsin

Citizen Action of Wisconsin