

# Supporting Workers, Strengthening Families:

## The Value of State Family and Medical Leave Laws

State family and medical leave laws give workers the time they need to care for their health and their families.<sup>1</sup> While these laws vary in terms of pay, protections, and eligibility, they strengthen families, support businesses, and boost the economy by allowing workers to manage caregiving responsibilities without financial hardship.

### What is FMLA?

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave within a 12-month period.<sup>2</sup> Employees can use FMLA leave to:

- + Care for a newborn, adopted, or foster child
- + Care for a seriously ill family member
- + Recover from their own serious health condition

FMLA applies to private employers with 50 or more employees.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, states can expand on FMLA protections, and many have done so.<sup>4</sup>

### State Family and Medical Leave Laws Vary

States have implemented different policies to address paid leave needs. These policies include:

- + Mandatory Paid Family and Medical Leave
- + Paid Parental Leave for State Employees
- + Voluntary Paid Leave
- + Paid Sick Leave
- + School Leave

### Mississippi Should Adopt Paid Family and Medical Leave

Mississippi's lack of paid leave policies is harming workers and the economy. Without paid family and medical leave:

- 954,000 Mississippi workers (79%) lack access to paid leave.
- 67% of workers in Mississippi cannot even access unpaid leave under FMLA.<sup>8</sup>



Because Mississippi has no paid family and medical leave program, workers miss out on approximately **119,000 NEEDED LEAVES**



which results in **\$372 MILLION LOST IN WAGES,**



**OF WHICH \$210 MILLION**  
of the lost wages are from women alone<sup>9</sup>

## Everyone Benefits from Paid Leave.

To ensure a strong, inclusive, and effective state-level paid leave program, key policy considerations should include:



### Comprehensive Coverage

Protects workers who need time off for their own health, parental bonding, caregiving, military-related needs, and recovery from domestic or sexual violence.



### Inclusive Family Definition

Recognizes non-traditional and extended family caregiving relationships beyond legal or biological ties.



### Adequate Wage Replacement

Ensures workers receive 80-100% of their wages, particularly for low-income workers.



### Guaranteed Minimum Leave

Provides at least 12 weeks of paid leave.



### Job Protections

Ensures workers can return to their jobs without fear of retaliation, demotion, or termination.



### Universal Access

Covers all workers, including full-time, part-time, self-employed, seasonal, and independent contractors, across all industries and employer sizes.



### Fair Accrual System

Allows workers to accrue paid leave based on a minimum wage standard, not just hours worked.



### Employer Contributions

Requires employers to help fund the program.<sup>9</sup>



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