



January 30, 2024

Senate Finance Committee Chair Liz Krueger
Assembly Ways and Means Committee Chair Helene E. Weinstein
Senator, Jessica Ramos, Chair Senate Standing Committee on Labor
Assemblyperson, Harry B. Bronson, Chair Assembly Standing Committee on Labor

(Sent via email to financechair@nysenate.gov and wamchair@nyassembly.gov)

On behalf of the American Heart Association, the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke, we are committed encouraging healthier lifestyles and reducing the risks associated with chronic disease. We believe all New Yorker's deserve to live longer and healthier lives and ask you to join us in this fight by supporting these critical policy efforts.

Now more than ever it is critical for New York State to invest in the health of its residents. We are working to ensure that all our residents, especially our children and families are being able to have access to vital services. A comprehensive Family Paid Medical and Family Leave policy that provides for adequate and accessible paid leave is vital to ensuring workers can manage a serious personal health condition, care for a family member with a serious health condition, or bond with a new child without worrying about losing their income or employment. The American Heart Association has long fought to ensure that people have access to care to support their health and wellbeing, and being able to take time off work is fundamentally an access to care issue. New York's current patchwork system of inadequate paid and unpaid leave forces some patients and caregivers to choose between taking care of themselves and their families or keeping their income and job. We feel strongly that all New York workers have access to comprehensive paid family and medical leave.

Too many workers are forced to sacrifice their savings or their jobs when they need time off to bond with a new child or care for themselves or their families. All workers, no matter where they live or who their employer is, should have access to paid family and medical leave. Paid leave helps children and families thrive, which improves their overall health and benefits the economy. Paid family and medical leave is important for the short- and long-term health of adults and children. We know that nursing parents who have access to paid leave are more likely to breastfeed, which has been shown to improve the heart health of the parent and baby. Paid leave policies may lead to fewer preterm and low-birthweight babies, especially for Black mothers. Paid family and medical leave is good for businesses and the economy. Businesses that offer paid leave may see increased productivity, profits, retention, and morale and decreased turnover. States should ensure workers can manage personal and family life events without worrying about losing their income or job. This includes managing a serious personal health condition, caring for a family member with a serious health condition, or bonding with a new child after birth, adoption, or placement in foster care. We know that a comprehensive law may help improve the health of families, reduce food insecurity, allow more women to reenter the workforce, and boost business and employee retention. We must act now to ensure the next generation of children grows into healthy adults. Thank you in advance for your consideration of these important issues. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,
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