



November 18, 2019

The Honorable Jack Reed  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

The members of the DOJ Gender Equality Network (DOJ GEN) urge you to keep the bipartisan Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA) provision of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020, contained in subtitle B of title XI of the House amendment. This common-sense provision will help federal families, children, and the country we serve.

DOJ GEN is an employee group at the U.S. Department of Justice.<sup>1</sup> Our more than 500 members throughout the country advocate for policies and practices that enhance workplace equality. Promoting equitable family leave is one of our top priorities.

Many studies have shown how crucial paid family leave is for employees. As the nation's largest employer, the federal government should be a role model in this respect. But our members, and indeed all federal employees, have no access to paid family leave. We can use only a limited amount of accrued sick leave to recover from childbirth, care for a sick family member, or cope with a serious personal illness. This creates very difficult situations for federal employees and their families, which Congress can resolve.

Enclosed in this letter are summaries of hardships our members experienced due to a lack of paid family leave. Among them are employees who:

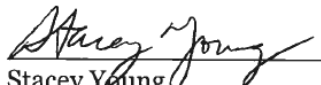
- Had to choose between paying their bills and spending time with a dying parent or newborn child.
- Returned to work before being physically ready after exhausting accrued sick leave to recover from a medically induced coma.
- Postponed having a child after exhausting all sick and vacation leave battling cancer, and could not accrue more leave because of post-remission medical visits.
- Cut short time with a newborn after using up sick leave during a high-risk pregnancy.
- Postponed necessary medical treatment after exhausting sick leave for parental leave.

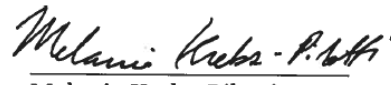
Paid family leave will not only benefit federal employees, but also help strengthen the federal workforce for the benefit of all Americans. The current lack of paid family leave leads to employee turnover, and makes the federal government less competitive in recruiting top talent.

This is a moment that could move us significantly closer to fairness and equality for federal employees. FEPLA received bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. It's time to make it law.

We hope to discuss this with you. We can be reached at [dojgenderequalitynetwork@gmail.com](mailto:dojgenderequalitynetwork@gmail.com).

Respectfully,

  
Stacey Young  
DOJ GEN President

  
Melanie Krebs-Pilotti  
DOJ GEN Vice-President

---

<sup>1</sup> DOJ GEN does not speak on behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice or the administration.