



Senate Finance Committee Paid Leave Working Group

Interim Update and Next Steps
March 6, 2020

In May of 2019, Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Wyden asked Senator Cassidy (R-LA) and Senator Hassan (D-NH) to co-chair the bipartisan Senate Finance Committee working group to consider the issue of federal paid family leave policy.

In addition to Senators Cassidy and Hassan, Senators Tim Scott (R-SC), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Bob Casey (D-PA), Todd Young (R-IN), and Sherrod Brown (D-OH) serve as members. Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Wyden also serve as *ex-officio* members.

To date, the working group has conducted intensive, off-the-record, staff level roundtables to properly educate member offices on the intricacies of the corresponding subject matter. Leading experts from the Congressional Research Service led collaborative sessions focusing largely on current federal law, state law, foreign law, and existing private sector responses. Subject matter covered includes:

1. **Job protection and anti-retaliation**
2. **Caregiver leave**
3. **Medical leave**
4. **Parental leave**

The merits of current federal proposals have not yet been analyzed by the working group. Such proposals include, but are not limited to, the FAMILY Act, the New Parents Act, the CRADLE Act, the Advancing Support for Working Families Act, the Support Working Families Act, and the Paid Family Leave Pilot Extension Act. Later this year, the working group will hold a public, Senator-level, roundtable to consider the merits of such proposals. Federal legislators will be invited to present their suggested solutions, and subject matter experts will likewise be asked to provide input.

In the meantime, the working group will continue to host staff level roundtables. Topics to be considered will include current state and foreign paid leave administrative frameworks, financing options, benefit value and structure, and plan implementation.

The working group invites interested parties to submit comments and request meetings. Inquiries should be directed to: paidfamilyleave@finance.senate.gov

Grassley: “I appreciate the hard work and leadership of Senator Cassidy, Senator Hassan and every other member of the Finance Committee’s paid leave working group. This is a complicated issue with many factors to consider, but we all recognize that the first months of life are critical for newborns and the success of the next generation. For many parents, childcare costs are unaffordable. Federal family leave laws need to be updated to reflect today’s workforce and economy. The working group’s findings will help inform the Senate’s next steps.”

Wyden: “The lack of comprehensive paid family and medical leave is holding Americans back from achieving their full potential, both at home and at work. This bipartisan group is serving an important purpose by convening experts and big thinkers on such a critical issue, but there’s a lot of work ahead to usher the United States into the 21st Century.”

Cassidy: “We need to work together to find bipartisan solutions that support families and protect taxpayers without raising taxes or forcing mandates.”

Hassan: “No American should be forced to make the impossible choice between making ends meet and caring for a loved one or navigating a personal health crisis. I’ll keep working with my colleagues from both parties in this group to try to find a bipartisan path forward on this pressing issue.”

Crapo: “Our bipartisan working group has been hard at work to determine the most sustainable path forward on family leave policies. I remain committed to addressing the needs of working Americans both inside and outside the home, while also ensuring businesses have the flexibility to succeed.”

Brown: “If we truly value the dignity of work, we need to recognize that paid family leave is something all workers should have the opportunity to earn. I won’t stop fighting until all workers have access to paid family leave.”

Young: “Hoosiers need policies that benefit both families and the workforce. That is why I introduced the Support Working Families Act, which provides a needed lifeline to new parents without forcing mandates on employers or burdening taxpayers. I am encouraged by the efforts of this working group, and I look forward to advancing innovative solutions to support families.”

Scott: “I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to explore the challenges and opportunities at hand as we consider potential avenues for enhancing access to paid family leave. Working families are the heart of my Opportunity Agenda, and the ongoing briefings and discussions undertaken by our group have elevated an important dialogue on the federal government’s role in facilitating efforts to close access gaps.”

Cortez Masto: “Too many Americans have been forced to make the impossible choice between caring for a sick parent, spouse or child and making a living. Everyone deserves the certainty of a paycheck while they meet with demands of being a caregiver. That’s why I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to find bipartisan, commonsense solutions that support families.”