

A Workable Balance:

Report to Congress on Family and
Medical Leave Policies

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FAMILY

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Commission on Leave Members

The Honorable Christopher J. Dodd,
Chairman
U.S. Senator
Connecticut

The Honorable Donna R. Lenhoff,
Vice Chair
General Counsel and Director of Work
and Family Programs
Women's Legal Defense Fund

The Honorable Ellen Bravo
President
9to5, National Association of Working
Women

The Honorable Larry E. Craig
U.S. Senator
Idaho

The Honorable Leland B. Cross, Jr.,
Esq.
Attorney-at-Law
Ice, Miller, Donadio and Ryan

The Honorable Pamela L. Egan
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Montana Family Union, AFL-CIO

The Honorable Steve Gunderson
U.S. Representative
Wisconsin, 3rd District

The Honorable Lenore Miller
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Retail, Wholesale, and Department
Store Union, AFL-CIO

The Honorable Scottie Theresa Neese
CEO
Terry Neese Personnel Services

The Honorable Richard L. Reinhardt
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PII Affiliates, Ltd.

The Honorable Patricia Schroeder
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The Honorable Mary Tavenner
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The Honorable Ronald H. Brown,
Ex-Officio
Secretary of Commerce

The Honorable Philip Lader,
Ex-Officio
Administrator, Small Business
Administration

The Honorable Robert B. Reich,
Ex-Officio
Secretary of Labor

The Honorable Donna E. Shalala
Secretary of Health and Human
Services

Ann Bookman
Executive Director

April 30, 1996

The Honorable Nancy Landon Kassebaum
Chairman
The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-6300

**Commission On Family
and Medical Leave**

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Honorable William F. Goodling
Chairman
The Honorable William L. Clay
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Economic and Educational
Opportunities United States House of
Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515-6100

Dear Chairman Kassebaum, Senator Kennedy,
Chairman Goodling and Representative Clay:

On behalf of the Commission on Family
and Medical Leave, I am pleased to transmit
to you "A Workable Balance: Report to
Congress on Family and Medical Leave
Policies," the final report of the
Commission.

As you know, the Commission was created
with the enactment of the Family and Medical
Leave Act of 1993 and was charged with
examining the impact of this new law and
other family and medical leave policies on
workers and employers across the country.
Our membership was diverse and divided on the
enactment of the FMLA itself. But since its
first meeting in November 1993, the
Commission pursued its statutory mission in a
cooperative, thoughtful and comprehensive way.

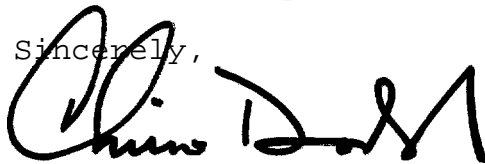
The Commission undertook two major
research surveys that provide us with the
very first statistically valid and reliable in-
formation on the national impact of these
policies on businesses and employees. In
addition, we held hearings across the country
and heard from a diverse group of businesses,
employees and their representatives about

their experiences with the new law and other family-friendly policies. Finally, the Commission and the National Academy of Sciences convened a workshop with the nation's foremost experts to review the findings of our research and what they meant for America's workers and employers.

This report is good news for America's families and businesses. The Family and Medical Leave Act is working for millions of workers and their families. The research shows it has clearly become an important tool in the effort to balance the demands of family and work. Fully two-thirds of covered employers have expanded their policies to come into compliance with the FMLA. And workers have not been the only ones to benefit. The great majority of companies reported no or only minor new costs, and this in the period in which they had to implement the FMLA. Beyond reporting few problems, some businesses also indicated they have seen a positive benefit from these policies in increased productivity and lower worker turnover.

As chairman of the Commission, I am honored to present our final report to you and hope that you find it a valuable source of information on the impact of family and medical leave policies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Dodd", written over the word "Sincerely,".

CHRISTOPHER J. DODD
Chairman
Commission on Leave

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

**SECRETARY OF LABOR
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

April 30, 1996

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United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510-6100

Dear Chairman Kassebaum, Senator Kennedy, Chairman Goodling and Representative Clay:

The Department of Labor joins with the bipartisan Commission on Leave in the release of "*A Workable Balance: Report to Congress on Family and Medical Leave Policies.*" This report is the culmination of the Commission's two-year effort to evaluate the effects of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

The FMLA, signed into law by President Clinton in 1993, is intended to help Americans balance their work and family responsibilities in an era when most households are headed either by two working parents or by single mothers. The signature features of the Act require businesses with more than 50 employees to allow up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a new born or adopted child, to attend to their own serious health needs, or to care for an ill parent, child or spouse. The FMLA also established the Commission on Leave and gave it the mission of assessing the new law's impact on workers, families and employers.

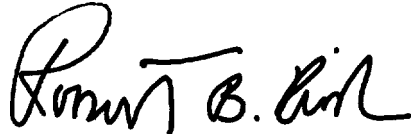
The enclosed report shows that the FMLA is of great benefit to a large number of working Americans while imposing minimal burdens on employers. Fewer workers will have to choose between their jobs and their loved ones if a child or parent should need care. For their part, most businesses find that the new law is easy to administer and costs are small. The majority of leaves are short in duration and most workers return to their jobs. In fact, some businesses have reported reduced employee turnover, enhanced employee productivity and improved morale which they attribute to the FMLA. The Family and Medical Leave Act is good for families and good for business.

The Commission members and staff are to be commended for their dedication and hard work in the preparation of this report — a process that included systematic review of existing data on family and medical leave policies, two national surveys to gauge the effects of the FMLA on workers and employers, and three public hearings. In particular, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the Commission's chair, Senator Christopher Dodd, who has been a leader on the FMLA for many years — long before it became law. Our thanks also to Senator Larry Craig, Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder, Congressman Steve Gunderson,

and the representatives of business, labor, working women and their families for their contributions and service to the commission. And we are deeply grateful to the three successive executive directors who gave such outstanding service to the Commission — Irasema Garza, Susan King and Ann Bookman.

Thanks to the work of the Commission on Leave, we can be sure that the FMLA is an effective response to the changing demographics of the American workplace. The Act has succeeded in bringing many Americans a benefit that was once afforded to a fortunate few — the knowledge that they can return to their jobs and keep their health benefits if they need unpaid time off to meet medical or family needs. The FMLA is helping Americans achieve the workable balance they have long sought.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B. Reich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" being the most prominent.

Robert B. Reich
Secretary of Labor