

**Doc. 1218**

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**Subject:** FMLA

I understand you are in the midst of reviewing the Family Medical Leave Act and wanted to voice my support for this Act as a mother and as a developmental psychologist. The work I do centers on the transition to parenthood, a time of tremendous psychological, financial, relational and physical upheaval for families. All of the research I have read, as well as my own work with new mothers, points to the importance of not only maintaining the provisions of the FMLA, but expanding them. By providing PAID family leave, our government would be allowing more mothers and fathers to stay home with their new infants and newly adopted children (among other things), giving these new families the golden opportunity to cement the bonds of attachment that are related to so many positive outcomes in the children--things as broad and basic as better social adjustment and cognitive attainments.

Mothers who are able to stay home with their infants longer than 6 weeks after birth show better adaptation to the role of motherhood, provide higher quality parenting to their children, and perform better at work. These factors all have real economic meaning. Children who receive higher quality parenting need fewer government dollars over the course of their lives--for things like mental health counseling, juvenile justice services, and adult correctional services.

Parents dealing with a premature birth (rates of which are currently on the rise) are even more in need of the provisions of the FMLA. I urge you to bring our country up to date with virtually every other industrialized nation and not only renew the FMLA, but extend it to provide PAID leave to families. Doing so is in the best interest of our nation.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter,

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