



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

**Statement for the Record  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections  
Hearing on “The Healthy Families Act (H.R. 1784): Examining a Plan to Secure  
Paid Sick Leave for U.S. Workers”  
March 11, 2020**

The Co-chairs of the Developmental Disabilities, Autism and Family Support Task Force of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) express our strong support for the Healthy Families Act (H.R. 1784). CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

Our organizations serve and advocate on behalf of persons with a range of intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), such as autism, Down syndrome, and cerebral palsy. The vast majority of our constituents live in the family home and families are overwhelmingly their primary source of support. Unfortunately, the significant and growing reliance on families is not being met with policies that help families to balance their work and family responsibilities. This poses a particular threat to our constituents who experience greater rates of chronic health problems, such as cardiovascular illness, asthma, and seizures.

Presently, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) only provides certain employees with up to 12 weeks of *unpaid*, job-protected leave per year. The law applies to employees of all public agencies, all public and private elementary and secondary schools, and companies with 50 or more employees to care for themselves or their spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition. Not only does this law provide no financial benefit for workers, it also fails to provide job security for millions of Americans who only work part time - which is the case for a large percentage of parents of children with I/DD to manage their caregiving responsibilities – or who work for smaller employers.

The need for a comprehensive national paid sick day policy has never been more urgent. While the harms of employees not having access to paid sick leave have long been known, the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic brings into stark relief how the lack of such a policy impacts the spread of disease and the resulting threat to the global economy.

Every day, more Americans are being directed by public health and elected officials to practice social distancing, including working from home and keeping their children from school, to help slow the disease. For the many who do not have the kinds of jobs that can be done remotely (such as the

restaurant, transportation, or health care industries), this is simply not possible. Instead, far too many are putting their lives and those of others at risk because they cannot afford to take time off.

The Healthy Families Act would ameliorate such public health crises by creating a national paid sick days standard. This legislation would allow workers in businesses with at least 15 employees to earn up to 56 hours, or seven days, of paid sick leave each year. It would also allow workers in businesses with fewer than 15 employees to earn up to seven *job-protected* unpaid sick days.

We strongly support this legislation that will help millions of American workers, including families of persons with I/DD, to meet their health and financial needs and improve public health.

Sincerely,

Annie Acosta  
The Arc

Angela Lello  
Autism Speaks

Samantha Crane  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Kim Musheno  
Autism Society of America

Jill Kagan  
National Respite Coalition

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