

PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW ONE FAMILY AT A TIME



BIG SKY
Brighter Future

Charting the course for a better Montana.

Family values means valuing families. To ensure workers can care for their families without the risk of financial insecurity, Montana should:

- Implement a statewide family and medical leave insurance program.



“Paid leave allowed me to focus on my family, and I didn’t have to choose between money and my mom.”

Nina, Helena

HOW WE GOT HERE

The health of our communities is inextricably connected with our ability to care for our families. At some point, nearly every worker faces a moment when they need time off – whether it is to care for a child or parent, recover from a serious illness or injury, or to bond with a new child. But many Montanans are forced to make impossible choices between their paycheck and the health of themselves and their families. In a recent survey of Montana businesses, 87 percent of businesses were not providing paid family leave.

A long history of discrimination has resulted in Black, Indigenous, and people of color more likely to work in low-paying jobs without access to any type of leave. Access to leave can address some of the barriers workers making low incomes face, providing them the time they need to care for themselves and their family members while still paying rent, putting food on the table, and saving for the future.

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ON THE HORIZON

Implement a statewide family and medical leave insurance program. The Montana Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act (FAMLI Act) would pool small contributions from employees and employers to create a dedicated funding stream for workers when they need time off to care for themselves or a loved one. From these small contributions, representing less than half of one percent of wages, eligible workers would receive a significant portion of their wages while on leave.

Several states have implemented a similar program, demonstrating a cost-effective approach that helps both workers and business. Employers retain workers and ensure a healthy workforce. In addition, businesses keep more people attached to employment while they are injured or caretaking. Workers could build and sustain financial security and improve the well-being of their family. Workers at lower incomes would receive a greater share of their income while on leave, which helps those families who need it most. A broad definition of family ensures that workers who face various family circumstances are covered including those who need time off to care for a seriously ill parent, domestic partner, or sibling.



ABOUT BIG SKY BRIGHTER FUTURE

Big Sky Brighter Future is charting a clear course to rebuild our state. This concrete plan for lawmakers has specific proposals to help families, workers, children, and communities, and creates a tax code that works for everyone. Montana cannot go back to the time when families faced barriers to build their best future. We can move our state forward and make it one where we can all live, work, and enjoy all Big Sky Country has to offer. There's a better Montana on the horizon, and this is how we get there.