Voters’ Policy Preferences on Paid Family Leave

December 2019
Verified Voter Omnibus
Conducted on behalf of Ethics and Public Policy Center

December 9 - December 14, 2019
N = 1,006 Registered Voters drawn from voter-file matched online panel
Key Findings

- **Paid family leave is quite popular.** Wide majorities of men and women of all parties believe that parents ought to be eligible for some form of paid family leave, including Trump voters and Trump Country residents.

- **Employers, not taxpayers, are the preferred payer.** Majorities oppose new taxes or new government spending, but six in ten think employers should cover the costs.

- **Over half say paid leave should generally be three months or less.** While just under a quarter of voters choose a more generous standard, most believe three months or fewer is the most appropriate timeframe for paid family leave.

- **Most view support for paid leave as a positive or neutral proposition.** Moms and Hispanics are more likely to support public officials who back paid leave, while conservatives are more neutral, with very low levels of strong opposition.
Who supports paid family leave?
Most think paid family leave should be available.

Q. “Most parents with children in the United States should be eligible for some form of paid family leave benefits.”

- Overall: Agree 71%, Unsure 14%, Disagree 15%
- Men: Agree 66%, Unsure 13%, Disagree 21%
- Women: Agree 75%, Unsure 9%, Disagree 15%
This support crosses party and gender lines.

Q. “Most parents with children in the United States should be eligible for some form of paid family leave benefits.”

Overall: 71% Agree, 14% Unsure, 15% Disagree

GOP Men: 63% Agree, 14% Unsure, 23% Disagree

GOP Women: 65% Agree, 18% Unsure, 17% Disagree

Ind Men: 57% Agree, 15% Unsure, 28% Disagree

Ind Women: 72% Agree, 21% Unsure, 7% Disagree

Dem Men: 79% Agree, 10% Unsure, 11% Disagree

Dem Women: 86% Agree, 11% Unsure, 3% Disagree
Q. “Most parents with children in the United States should be eligible for some form of paid family leave benefits.”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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This support crosses ideological lines.
Key groups of voters are paid leave supporters.

88% of Hispanic voters say they are supportive of paid family leave.

83% of moms say they are supportive of paid family leave.

75% of suburban women say they are supportive of paid family leave.

73% of Trump Country voters say they are supportive of paid family leave.

59% of Trump voters say they are supportive of paid family leave.
Who should pay for paid family leave?
Most think paid family leave should not require new taxes or government funding.

No new taxes should be imposed on taxpayers to fund paid leave. 64% Agree, 31% Neither/Unsure, 11% Disagree.

Paid family leave should not cost the government more money. 54% Agree, 33% Neither/Unsure, 13% Disagree.
Opposition to new taxes is bipartisan.

Q. “No new taxes should be imposed on taxpayers to fund paid leave.”

- **Republican**:
  - Agree: 71%
  - Neither/Unsure: 21%
  - Disagree: 7%

- **Independent**:
  - Agree: 60%
  - Neither/Unsure: 26%
  - Disagree: 14%

- **Democrat**:
  - Agree: 61%
  - Neither/Unsure: 26%
  - Disagree: 13%
Democrats are slightly more open to paid leave being supported by government funding.

Q. “Paid family leave should not cost the government more money.”

- **Republican**: Agree 68%, Neither/Unsure 24%, Disagree 8%
- **Independent**: Agree 58%, Neither/Unsure 28%, Disagree 14%
- **Democrat**: Agree 41%, Neither/Unsure 40%, Disagree 19%

*Echelon Insights*
Employers are expected to cover the cost of paid leave, while offering access to Social Security benefits is less popular.

Employers should be required to cover the cost of providing paid leave.

Working parents should be able to access their Social Security benefits early to fund their paid leave.

[Bar chart showing percentage of agreement, neutrality, and disagreement for each statement]
Majorities across party lines think employers should pay.

Q. “Employers should be required to cover the cost of providing paid leave.”
Only one-third in each party group supports using Social Security benefits early to fund paid leave.

Q. “Working parents should be able to access their Social Security benefits early to fund their paid leave.”
What should paid family leave look like?
Most believe paid family leave should apply to a variety of circumstances including caring for newborns or family members.

Q. Under which circumstances, if any, should you be able to use paid family leave benefits?

- Caring for a family member with a serious health condition/concern: 71%
- Caring for a newborn: 69%
- Caring for my own health condition/concern: 64%
- Caring for a newly-adopted child or newly-placed foster child: 50%
- Family circumstances arising from a military service member's deployment: 46%
Most think three months or less is the right amount of time for paid family leave.

Q. In general, how long should a working parent receive paid family leave benefits?

- Up to one month: 21%
- Up to three months: 35%
- Up to six months: 16%
- More than six months: 6%
Very little gender difference around beliefs about length of paid family leave leave.

Q. In general, how long should a working parent receive paid family leave benefits?
Most feel paid family leave should be paid as a consistent percent of income rather than scaled for lower-income workers.

- **63%** of respondents believe that all workers should get the same percentage of their pay.
- **14%** believe that lower-income workers should get a higher percentage of their pay while on leave.
- **8%** believe that paid family leave benefits should not be offered.

Echelon Insights
How to message about paid family leave?
“Paid family leave” is the label most think best describes the policy at hand.
Top three benefits of paid family leave: helping workers stay employed, promoting healthy bonding, reducing financial strain

Q. Supporters of paid family leave say that it provides many benefits for working mothers and fathers. Of the following, please choose the top three benefits of paid family leave...

- Helps workers stay employed and avoid needing public assistance (55%)
- Promotes healthy bonding between parents and their babies (47%)
- Reduces financial strain of having children (45%)
- Supports the health and development of babies (41%)
- Supports better mental and physical health for mothers (35%)
- Lowers infant mortality rates (14%)

Echelon Insights
Democrats and independent women are more likely to support officials who back paid family leave, while independent men and Republicans are more neutral.

Q. “In the upcoming 2020 elections, would you be more or less likely to support a public official who believes that all U.S. employees should have access to paid family leave, or would it not make much of a difference to you?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Much/Somewhat More Likely</th>
<th>Neither More Nor Less Likely</th>
<th>Much/Somewhat Less Likely</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOP Men</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOP Women</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<td>Ind Men</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ind Women</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dem Men</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dem Women</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Much/Somewhat More Likely
Neither More Nor Less Likely
Much/Somewhat Less Likely
Key groups of voters are more likely to support a public official who believes we should have paid family leave.

66% of moms (+ 78% of married moms) say “more likely to support”…

62% of Hispanic voters…

61% of parents overall…

61% of single women…
The political risk of supporting paid leave appears low.

37% of Trump Country voters say it would make them more supportive...

Only 9% say it would make them less supportive. (7% much less.)

26% of Republican men say it would make them more supportive...

Only 19% say it would make them less supportive. (8% much less.)

27% of conservatives say it would make them more supportive...

Only 21% say it would make them less supportive. (8% much less.)
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