



Position Statement on

Paid Leave Policies Within the Field of Government Relations

This issue goes far beyond paid leave policies in the field of government relations – indeed, it transcends gender. At the center of the issues facing women in our field are power inequities, whose contributing factors include the wage gap, lack of diversity equity and inclusion, limited paid leave policies, and above all else, professional conduct. In 2018, we are raising our voice on each of these issues to advance and empower women in the field of government relations.

Background: Although the 1993 passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was an initial step in the right direction to guaranteeing employees their job while they took up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, over two decades later the United States is one of only three industrialized nations without a national paid leave program. Although many states, cities and individual businesses have implemented paid leave policies with great success, consistency remains elusive. Only 59% of U.S. employees are eligible for unpaid leave under the FMLA. Of eligible employees who did not use FMLA but could have, 46% cite lack of pay as the reason.ⁱ

Studies have shown that paid leave programs improve health and well-being of those taking it, as well as their children, and improves productivity and longevity in a jobⁱⁱ. Paid, job-protected leave is essential to employees' well-being. It enables them to care for themselves or a family member – whether during longer term leave needs such as the birth or adoption of a child, to care for an ailing parent or the chronic or acute illness of themselves or their child, or shorter term sick days or the need for vacation time for work-life harmony.

WGR Position: Women in Government Relations (WGR) strongly supports the implementation of paid leave policies within government relations offices.

WGR's Commitment to Paid Leave Policies: WGR's mission, vision and strategic direction recognize the growing importance and role of women in the field, and that government relations professionals- specifically women – are leading advocates within their organizations as well as in their official role as government relations professionals. We also recognize that women are often primary caregivers in their personal lives, and benefit greatly from paid leave policies.

WGR will:

- Raise awareness among our membership and within our professional community at large of the need to implement paid leave – in all its forms - within the profession;
- Conduct research to further investigate the types of paid leave programs that are provided in the industry;
- Provide programming to our members that share information and guide members regarding paid leave; and
- Support policies that aim to ensure paid leave policies in the government relations field.

ⁱ Klerman, JA, Daley K and Pozniak A. *Family and Medical Leave in 2012: Technical Report*. 2014. Cambridge, MA.

ⁱⁱ Appelbaum, E. and R. Milkman, “Leaves That Pay: Employer and Worker Experiences with Paid Family Leave in California,” Center for Economic Policy Research. 2011. <http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-familyleave-1-2011.pdf>.