

**Results of Employee Survey
Unedited Responses Received for Questions 14, 17 and 18 and Additional Comments
For Review January 10, 2022**

14. Tell us more [about life events you've experienced], if you're comfortable doing that. (288 responses)

- For the pregnancy loss, I only took one personal day, but it would have been really nice to have more time. For the birth, I was fortunate to have 12 weeks paid and then 12 weeks unpaid. I think it should be standard to get 24 weeks, but more time paid than just 12 weeks. My partner had less than 2 weeks "off" and was still working some during that time. I think it would be extremely important for partners/fathers to also get time off, as caring for a baby alone is very challenging.
- I had paternity leave for when my wife gave birth to our son, which I was able to split. It was amazing and allowed me to bond with my son and take care of him when my wife's unpaid leave ended.
- My organization offered short-term disability through AFLAC for my maternity leave, cobbled with accrued time off, but it wasn't more than about a month or two and I wish it could have been longer.
- I am cutting back to part time and losing pay to be able to care for my infant.
- I recognize my position is more privileged than most in these situations pertaining to the birth of my daughter. I was provided job protection for 12 weeks but any time beyond that point was at the discretion of my supervisor to approve or not approve and was reliant on me either having enough vacation time to fully cover that time or take unpaid time. In addition, my spouse was in the same position. It meant we could combine our time to be together as a family or strategically stagger that time so that we didn't have to seek childcare right away at the 3 month mark. Also, with a shortage of affordable and safe childcare options, you needed to start planning for what your care would need to be well before your child was even born to ensure a seat. This often requires large deposit to hold a seat all while you aren't sure how you personally or as a family will be at the time of anticipated need. Taking that precious time after the birth of a child to be together as a family and adjust to the new cycles of life is overwhelming enough without having to worry about being paid or job security on top of it. It should be a basic right in all situations outlined above that paid time off and job security would be afforded to an individual who finds themselves in any of these challenging situations.
- "Affording" to take the unpaid time is...not exactly a good description for me. I took 3.5 months off unpaid when I gave birth to my daughter (it ended up being a little longer than anticipated because she had some health challenges we needed to address). We had to save and save and move things around for it to happen - and kept saying to each other "oh gosh can you imagine if this was an emergency and not 9 months of being able to plan!" I don't want to give the impression that we couldn't afford it - it was doable. It was just hard and if my partner wasn't super good at finances and planning, we would've been in a bad place.

During my leave, I used 3 weeks or so of combined sick/vacation time and then the rest of it was unpaid. Before I went on maternity leave, I had to work hours beyond what I would normally work because I had several complications that required me to take time during my workday to be at the hospital/doctor's appointments. I was lucky to have an understanding employer (and was salaried), and it was also this constant "I can't take sick/vacation time because I need to have as much as possible when I have the baby." I was fitting it in everywhere I could - even when I didn't feel well and probably shouldn't have been working.

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When I was on maternity leave, I also had to pay the entirety of my healthcare instead of being able to count on my employer to pay the share they usually did when I wasn't on leave. Frankly, that felt almost worse than having unpaid leave. I knew it was a board decision (I was at a nonprofit at the time), and yet I kept thinking "wow, you truly are acting like I'm not even an employee and just saving my spot for when I get back." I will say that some of my coworkers - including my boss - donated some of their sick/vacation time to me and that was such a loving and kind thing to do. However...the idea that your coworkers need to donate time they've earned so you can get paid for a few more days when you push a baby out of your body and then go through the newborn phase? That's just a sad and frankly embarrassing state of affairs.

- kids in quarantine makes it hard to work 40 hours, supplemental income during this time (family leave pay) would be lovely
- I had a foot injury that took months to finally diagnose, and then 2 months unemployed to have the surgery and recover from. Luckily the ACA had just started so I could keep insurance after leaving my job. That was a seasonal job that I chose not to renew because I could not stay on my feet until the surgery.

In the last month I had a covid scare because my co worker came to the office sick, and then tested positive a few days later. Especially in the days of covid, we need this so people who might be infectious can have the option to stay home, instead of coming to work while sick

- I took time off mostly unpaid (I had 4w of short term disability). I needed more time than the 12w that I took, but returned due to professional pressure/perceived obligations.
- I had a minor surgery the first time. Second time was when my dad passed.
- I had a premature infant due to early breaking of the water. I was required to have a 3 week hospital stay prior to having my infant early then an extended NICU stay effecting what little time off my company provided and my short term disability I used and it was mostly unpaid with some paid time at my partial salary amount.
- I was living in California when I had children. California has paid family leave for all employees - the Family and Medical Leave Act.
- I did not qualify for temporary disability so had to use my limited PTO to recover.
- Some employers offer limited leave, but 6 or more months is needed for childbirth and serious medical issues.
- In my previous work, I was part-time and didn't have much leave. My husband got sick and needed chemotherapy and ended up in the hospital. I took some days off, but probably not as many as I would have if I could have. His job, thankfully, had good support so he kept getting paid while he was out. It would've been so stressful if that hadn't been the case.
- I work for the Federal Government. I didn't have any paid time off for my ex-husband's military deployment. When I got cancer last year, I was able to take 6 weeks of paid leave to have surgery and recover.
- Paid family leave only available for maternity/paternity at my place of employment, not applicable for other family events/needs.
- I had a very hard time going back to work after each of my children. 12 weeks is not enough time to bond and breastfeed with a newborn baby.
- In 2015, I took an unpaid leave to care for my mother during the last year of her life. It was hard to manage the financial impact of not getting paid, but I was fortunate to be able to do it, because emotionally there was no other option than to spend that time with my mother. I'm eternally grateful that I could. This year, I took unpaid leave after the birth of my first child. We had a good amount of money saved, so the unpaid time wasn't a hardship for my family,

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thankfully. I know most families would not be in such a privileged position. Learning to parent a newborn and recovering from a c section are challenging enough; I can't imagine how my family would have coped if my spouse and I hadn't each been able to take three months of leave. Neither of us were paid during that leave, and I'm so thankful that we were able to do it anyway. It made a huge difference in our lives and our child's, and every family should get to have that time.

- 25 years ago I battled cancer for 6 months and my company continued my salary 100%
- Some type of paid leave is important.
- My first pregnancy/birth I had 6 weeks of leave at 66% of pay, followed by 6 weeks unpaid. It was incredibly difficult to budget and my spouse and I knocked out our savings. About a year later my employer expanded parental leave to 12 weeks fully paid, with the option to take an additional 12 unpaid. I had significant complications during the birth of my second child but was able to fully recover without the financial stress and the ticking clock winding down my limited leave. There is absolutely no way I could have gone back to work at 12 weeks, to say nothing of the 2 weeks many Maine birthing parents take. It would have been unsafe and medically inadvisable and would have severely impacted my already fragile mental health. This is no way to treat new parents and new babies.
- I significantly altered my career aspirations and job searches to accommodate my need for part-time/flexible work for caregiving. If jobs offered significant (more than a couple of days) of paid leave I could have pursued FT work in my field. We ended up investing much more in my husband's career because he did have better benefits and income. Several times I returned to work far ahead of when it was truly healthy for me -- more from pressure to do a "good job" and maintain my contract than direct fear of lack of income. I have juggled and hustled to provide care and work at the same time in ways that have been damaging to my health and spirit and ambitions. Paid FMLA would have changed my whole working life.
- I had enough time on the books that I was able to take a little time each week to help care for my father
- I had PTO to fall back on
- Not me, but my mother. She worked 4 jobs at one point to keep me, my terminally ill father, and herself afloat. I ended up picking up the slack at home while trying to be successful in school.
- Upon the birth of my child, I was able to take 12 weeks of paid time off, but I had to use my sick and (some) vacation time in order to do so. I now have no sick time left, and limited vacation days. I made that decision so I could stay home. I had severe postpartum anxiety/depression and did not feel ready to go back to work even at 12 weeks. To come back with minimal accrued time off was further discouraging.
- I originally planned to only take 3 months maternity leave (because that was all I was offered/had available as paid time) but then my spouse took a job out of state so I was able to take 10 months of leave before returning to work. The timeline for my return to work was entirely my own and I am very grateful for how much time I was able to take.
- I asked to be furloughed. I didn't get paid, but it was not a significant financial burden because I was living with my sick relative.
- Maternity leave should be longer and paid for the entire time.
- As a freelancer, I've been able to take a certain amount of time off as needed, but always had to weigh cost/benefit of giving up work

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- I could afford to take a few days off (or months off for maternity) but not as much as I would have liked and it was all unpaid
- My mother became terminally ill with COPD and I was unable to work as she required a significant amount of care in order to not have to be admitted to a nursing home.

- I worked full time and was assaulted by a family member. I no longer had a home to live in and was told I had the weekend to get myself together because "they had a business to run". I did not get paid time off and was forced to quit to relocate.
- No
- When I gave birth to my first child, I was given two thirds pay for 4 weeks and then I took 8 weeks unpaid. I accessed "short-term disability" insurance to receive the two thirds pay. I had to go back to work before me and my baby were ready because our family could not afford for me to stay home any longer.
- I have to use vacation time in order to be paid. If the length of time off permits, it dips into my company's extended sick bank, but only pays 60% of the hourly base rate of pay.
- Lived on one income when my children were young while also caring for elderly parents. Seriously sacrificed income and contributions to retirement. Lived on credit cards at times and it took many years to pay down debt.
- I had a surgery and lost a month of work. It put me in serious debt. I was helped by friends to pay my bills and sought help from the Actors Fund which paid my utility bills. It was very stressful.
- I was working for KVCAP-Educare in Kennebec County. This program was great at providing resources to the families it served. However, this organization did not provide paid family medical leave. My husband and I wanted to start a family. We knew I would not be able to take time off with our future child unless I found a job that supported family medical leave. I decided to become a teacher as I was told teachers get paid medical leave. Turns out my district does not offer paid medical leave. We would love to have a child of our own but we often question if we can afford it. We have thought about selling our home and living with family just so we can have a child. It breaks my heart that we have to consider this option just to have necessary time off with our future child.
- I didn't even know there was the possibility of leave due to family violence so I didn't ask
- I'm forced to use earned PTO time to go to medical appointments, if I'm sick, or my children are sick. I lost paid time getting my and my children's COVID vaccines. Simply wrong.
- I had ACL surgery and didn't think I had adequate time to recover.
- Changed jobs, didn't qualify for paid family leave due to waiting period and so did not have time off after my daughter was born this fall.
- I wanted a year off for pregnancy/birth/early infancy with my twins, so we made that work somehow (I left my job at the time, we moved in with friends/family, used savings, etc). I left another job earlier in my life to temporarily care for a parent with mental illness who was recovering from prostate cancer surgery.
- I had Hodgkin disease in college, was working part time at the time but left work and stayed in school. Lived off student loans and a credit card which took me years to pay off. When I had my daughter I had just started my current job 3 months earlier. I was fortunate that my workplace was ok with me using short term disability and FMLA. I don't think that was

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available for everybody in that way though, I just assumed it was something that kicked in that early. Several years later a new employee (3-4 months in, I think) got a debilitating brain condition and couldn't use short term disability because she hadn't been there long enough and she was let go because she couldn't come back to work. If I hadn't had Short term disability I don't know what I would have done, I'd have probably gone back to work much sooner than I did and/or our bills would have been an issue. Now I'm considering both a new job and a 2nd child and the leave policies factor heavily into my decision making.

- I had to use my sick days to pay for some of my maternity leave, but I was still unpaid for most of my leave.
- My son has autism and I was let go from a job for needing to take him to doctors visits.
- With my firstborn, I took 10 weeks off. With my second, I took 12 weeks. I recognize that I am way more fortunate than most - I am a senior executive (remote) with 10 years of loyalty to my company, which is based in New York, where paid leave is more generous. That being said, even 12 weeks is not enough time to fully recover/bond. It just isn't. We have been trained to be grateful because a small amount is "better than nothing" but just because it's not nothing doesn't mean it's enough. Other countries understand the importance of supporting families and women, it's truly shameful how far behind America (and Maine) is on this.
- I've taken leave three times to have three children. The first I was able to take 14 weeks and was paid but had to use up all my vacation and sick time to do so such that when I went back to work I had concerns that if my child was sick, I wouldn't be able to take any time off. I was lucky and this did not happen before I earned more time. I also had an emergency c-section and had an incredibly difficult recovery - it was about six weeks before I was able to take a short walk outside. I have no idea how someone would have returned to work in that condition. We also had a very hard time finding childcare for my first child and had to have family watch her for several months before we could get a spot in childcare.

With my other two children I had 12 weeks of paid leave (and was incredibly lucky to have that benefit) but would have preferred to take more time. We really should be giving parents the option to take four to six months. And men should get the same time as women.

- I moved to Maine from New York two years ago. I was in a unionized job that guaranteed 10 weeks of fully paid family and medical leave, on top of which I used the state's paid leave program. Altogether, I was able to spend over four months with my newborn daughter in her first year of life. Knowing how important that experience was for my bond with my daughter, I firmly believe all people should have that ability. Whether through a small payroll deduction or through the general fund, I urge Maine lawmakers fund a generous, expansive paid family and medical leave program.
- Part of my maternity leave was paid and part was not. We had to budget and my husband was only able to get 5 days off despite our child being born via C-section. I had to have someone else drive me to my doctor's appointments because he has returned to work. It was some of the most stressful time of my life, especially because of medical complications for my C-section. I got no extra paid time off when I had the C-Section. One child had medical challenges and I got no extra paid time off for that.
- I have short term disability insurance, but would much rather contribute to paid FMLA
- I had surgery when I was a college student. It occurred at the start of my winter break, so I was able to recover in that month-long or so period.

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- I had an injury and couldn't drive for several months. I had started a job as a temp several weeks before, but could not continue because I could not drive to work (2 years before the pandemic). I was out of work for several months without pay.
- I had twins and had to return to work after 12 unpaid weeks because I couldn't afford to lose my health insurance... It wasn't enough time for me to physically recover from or mentally/emotionally adjust to having two newborns.
- I took unpaid time while very sick and unable to function while pregnant and was fired for it.

- My oldest son was born 10.5 weeks premature. He lived at Maine Medical Center for 8 weeks. He was born on a Friday, and I was back at work on Tuesday. I had only 2 weeks of vacation days that I could take. My employer was flexible in letting me shift my hours so I could see my baby, but I did not get any time to address the crisis of this situation. I left that job for one with better benefits 3 months later, and 1 month after my child was born. I had to be "new" in a job with a 3-month-old, who was developmentally a 1-year-old.
- I've been lucky to work at employers who value my personal well being so I've been able to take leave. Everyone should have this right, not just people like me.
- My work was unable to accommodate any schedule changes. I had to use my own vacation time for family leave when a foster child joined our family. I ended up taking another job with scheduling flexibility.
- I work for a national organization that created policies for paid family leave and paid medical leave. I am able to take the time I need when life events occur without losing pay or my job. My wife works for the City of South Portland. There is no paid family leave or paid medical leave. She was unable to take anything other than her vacation and sick time when we began to foster our newborn foster daughter. If she used all of her vacation and sick time, she'd have unpaid leave that guarantees her job security, but then no vacation or sick time when we would need or want that as a family. I think it's shameful that the city we live in and she works in does not offer any paid family or paid medical leave.
- I had to go back to work after giving birth to my son in 2012 after 5.5 weeks off. I'd planned on taking another six weeks of short term disability-funded leave, which my HR person had ok'd and we'd gone through all the paperwork in advance. Neither they nor I realized I had not had my STD coverage long enough to take advantage of it and I couldn't afford to take unpaid leave. I ended up being notified that my coverage was denied a few weeks after I gave birth and had to scramble to consider my options and ultimately return to the office much sooner than I'd intended.
- I had a full 12 week unpaid FMLA that I supplemented through short term disability pay and some vacation and sick time I had accrued before giving birth but I was still not able to be paid at 100% of what I would've been making. I don't believe 12 weeks was all the time I needed, but it was the most I was going to get given the lack of a more robust policy.
- I work in a school now with benefits that include 10 paid days. I was a single mother for five years and had to make tough decisions to work and keep sick children home. At times my children were so young I had to take time off. One time I was sick and out for a week and a half. I had to take time without pay and my children and myself suffered financially.
- After I gave birth to my son, I took 3 months of leave. Half of it was paid at 80% of my salary, the remainder was unpaid. My employer at the time offered a short-term disability plan so I received a lump sum, which allowed me to pay for the cost of labor and delivery.

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- I only have this benefit because my employer is in Massachusetts and, for fairness, my employer graciously paid for my leave at a percentage.
- Have to use vacation time in order to get paid- family leave for giving birth is NOT a vacation
- My employer's policy has since changed, but because of adoption (and not childbirth), I was not given given paid leave. I also was entitled to the required 12 weeks of unpaid leave that year, and because of the death of a child (when I used 3 weeks of leave), I was only allowed 9 weeks of maternity leave later that same year.
- When my mother in law was diagnosed with Stage 4 Non small cell Lung cancer I was her caregiver. At first I was told that I could take as much time as I needed and that we "would figure it out". My mother in law ended up going from completely healthy looking to not able to walk and she died within 5 months. After having to travel down to Boston with her when she got necrotizing pneumonia my employer then told me that I could not take anymore time off without being in jeopardy of disciplinary action. I ultimately was not able to take as much time off as we needed. I ended up leaving the job, right before she passed away.
- I had 2 kids - first bigot 12 weeks and able to work on my return. My 2nd child I only had 6 weeks and I ended up quitting 3 months later bc I was so sleep deprived I did not know what I was doing. At least 12 week was needed to %Û_recover%Û and Form a good Bond. I breastfed both boys and suffered a lot of guilt with my second as I knew my body was not even close to healed despite the 2nd being the easier birth
- At the time I was not working at the job I have now that has benefits. I was not able to take the time I needed to grieve and heal. I feel like everyone should be able to take this time, every job should be required to offer it. Also the job I have now, I think you have to be working there for 1 year to qualify.
- I saved my PTO for the birth of my child and used that to be paid while away. I received temporary short term disability as well but that did not mean I was paid the full time off.
- I%Ûave cared for two dying parents, my wife birthed our son, and I have broken a leg
- In the past two years my life was unexpectedly and drastically altered. I lost my high level professional job at the University of Southern Maine through a %Ûrestructuring%Û•
_Ûã%Û. then COVID, then my father unexpectedly died, then my mother developed a brain tumor that%Ûs altered her life drastically. All of that resulted in my being my mother%Ûs primary caregiver now. With her medical situation, it%Ûs not possible to have a full time job (at best I%Ûd only be able to have a part time remote job). I know of other people at the University and several who work in corporate jobs who%Ûve been in similar situations. There must be some paid medical leave to cover these unavoidable emergencies- more than a week or two (when employers tell you to just use up your vacation and sick time)%Û.
- These things happened at different points in my life, so my work scenario was slightly different for each circumstance. Although I have always had basic paid leave available in theory, I am the primary breadwinner in my household, and I also work for small organizations, so I couldn't take off as much time as I wanted for maternity and post-pregnancy loss as I would have liked - ideally 5-6 months for new births and 2 weeks for pregnancy loss. What it really was: Birth #1- 6 weeks off then part time for 6 weeks; pregnancy loss - 2 days; Birth #2 - 3 months off
- I'm retired
- I've had a series of injuries, worst being my appendix bursting. Often times I've been employed at places that did not offer health I surance at all, much less paid leave.
- Most of the time was paid - but I had to take all vacation time first and I did take extra time that was unpaid.

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- I was unemployed due to Covid layoff but now have a full time job.
- I compare my maternity leave frequently to what my in laws receive living in Europe and its almost embarrassing to have to explain how little we get. I worked for the UMaine system when I had my second kid and had to burn through all of my vacation time just to get enough paid time off to physically recover which took far longer than the paid six weeks that were offered.
- My employer is based in CA and as a result I am not eligible for the state disability program which provides paid leave for 6-8 weeks after giving birth. I am expecting twins in June and am very stressed about them potentially arriving early, needing time in the NICU and not getting paid for this time because Maine does not offer any paid family leave.
- Regardless of pay, I would like my job to be protected past the 12 weeks that FMLA allows. If I budget and want/need to take 4-5 months off (mainly thinking of having a baby), I want my job protected.
- Elderly Parents and now have to have help 24 hours so I can continue to work
- I was able to continue working because it was remote. If I wasn't working remotely it would have been more of a struggle
- When I had my daughter, I had to go back to work in less than a week and it was hell. I was lucky enough to work from home but it was hard because I was recovering from child birth. For my son, I asked for two weeks off and they ended up laying me off. It was an extremely tough time and having children is so taxing emotionally and physically. I really needed time to recover but couldn't. It is ridiculous that this is the norm for so many people in this country.
- Lucky to have support from family
- When my daughter was born I chose to leave a full-time position as project manager due to her health issues at birth that kept me in the hospital with her for over a month. I had to make the decision to leave this job because I knew I had to be with her 24/7 once we returned home. I did not have the option for paid leave, nor did my partner.
- I am a frequently ill person who is not disabled enough to qualify for disability benefits so I have to work through my chronic condition in order to pay my bills. On several occasions I have left the hospital to go to work, or went to work when I was dealing with medical issues. I also have a very ill family member whose health is declining faster than we thought and I am unsure if I am able to leave work to help care for her. At present another family member is trying to help but he does not have a job where he has coverage if he leaves, even though he has the benefits in theory. I also have a different family member who I believe is in the process of quietly assembling an exit plan so she can safely leave her partner who is abusing her. I have offered to transport and house her should she choose to go, but my work schedule and hers are a major confounding factor. I would be a good candidate to assume the caregiving role for both of these people in my life but I genuinely do not know if my job will still be here should I go. I would greatly benefit from leave but do not know if it is accessible or would cover my needs, so I soldier on and push through the pain.

- Because I am self-employed I could not take leave without closing my business and closing my business would have led to financial challenge.

- This Country needs to provide much more support for the workforce •ü•

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- I had to stop going to work due to lack of child care but also was only paid 8 weeks of short term disability which didn't cover much. I have also struggled with multiple pregnancy losses and surgeries. I had to work through them only able to take a few days off.
- I am chronically ill, resulting in constant pain.

- This was decades ago. I was self employed and part-time employed. My partner was full time employed and we had health insurance through that. When I had a pregnancy loss, I took a week off unpaid. When my children were born, we had another family loss and also had to move to another city. It worked out better for me to be at home, unpaid. Eventually I began my own business again and grew it to be profitable.
- I stopped working to stay home with my daughter indefinitely. We rely solely on my husbands income.
- I had to pay Maine Health for my portion of my benefits while I was out on Maternity leave. I also had no job protection beyond 12 weeks FMLA, so I went back to work at that point even though I didn't want to. When my daughter was 4 months old, my partner and I listed and sold our home in Brunswick and moved in with his mom so that we could be mortgage free and I could afford to stay home with my baby, who is now 6 months old. Drastic measures, yes, but I will never get these days back with my daughter.
- No PTO After a miscarriage resulting in a D&C and had to return to work next day
- I had a few weeks of my maternity leave unpaid. I was unable to get FMLA for my fertility treatments. Both cases I had to use my vacation time.
- I recently lost a baby at 7 weeks. My manager was supportive with me staying home, but I only had enough earned time to stay home 2 days. I was still bleeding when I went back to work and was lightheaded and tired from the blood loss. My earned time bank is now almost 0 so I'm starting from scratch to save enough earned time to be able to take maternity leave for when we hopefully become pregnant again. I won't be able to take any time off from now until delivery if I get pregnant soon.
- My girlfriend had a miscarriage. I took one day of earned time to support her through the first day but had to go back to work before we were ready.
- When operating my own small business, my brother died unexpectedly and I was unable to take time away to grieve.
- I am mostly retired now, but I feel this is a benefit that employers should offer. I took care of 2 parents before they died as well as my husband after 3 hospitalizations. Just needing to take time to get him to doctor appointments was very stressful trying not to use up all of the leave I had at my job. It certainly depleted our savings because he was out of work for extended periods. I also had paid for short term disability insurance which helped.
- I could be retired, but choose to work part-time.
- I have not taken time when needed due to income and it being impossible to miss time, but also taken time when I had no choice due to child birth which had complications that kept me out longer than I was able to afford but that was out of my control. I actually had to beg my doctor to release me to work sooner than they wanted because I was drowning in bills and needing to feed my family.
- Mainers should always be encouraged to move to careers and better paying jobs and responsibilities with better benefits than trying to turn existing jobs into something not intended. I get paid time off that I earn. When it's gone it's gone. If I need to take

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unpaid leave over my own decision that exceeds my earned time I'm allowed to do it. But when I return I need to expect my current job description and requirements must be met.

- Mother with ruptured brain aneurysm requiring brain surgery and long recovery
- I did have some paid time off for parental bonding time that is a benefit from my employer. However for adopting a child short term disability is not approved so I was not paid for the remaining time off I took from my job. I was fortunate enough to be able to afford to do so, but this should not even be something new parents have to worry about. Regardless of how you become a parent those first 12 weeks, at least, with a new born should be paid time off.
- First baby born with severe health issues. He died at age 16 months. I was never able to take time off from work but was at the hospital as much as I could be. Second and third children were healthy but I had to return to work 6 weeks after the birth because I needed a paycheck I could have used another 2 weeks at least. I was breast feeding but found it problematic (finding time to pump) at work so we transitioned to bottles earlier than I would have liked. Last year my husband underwent radiation and chemo for throat cancer. I did get intermittent leave from work. Treatment lasted 6 months and I pretty much used it all up. He was not able to drive himself to appointments due to the narcotics he was on. Plus his diabetes was totally out of control. I ask him now and he doesn't remember a lot from that time.
- My mother has stage 4 lung cancer and I took unpaid FMLA time to go to chemo and other appointments with her. I had a miscarriage and was too ashamed to time time off, but I really should have physically and emotional healed from it. I gave birth this year, and had 4 weeks of paid leave from work. I did not consider this benefit when I took the job. My husband's work offers 2 weeks parental leave for employees. I've continued to utilize FMLA time to be home with my daughter, and am getting paid using my short term disability, sick and vacation time. I was admitted to the ER after delivery and was hospitalized for another 4 days and 3 nights.
- I've had 3 children and not getting an extended amount of time with a new baby is difficult. It's a whole new life to navigate and having other children to take care of while doing it is difficult.
- I'm a freelance interior designer, if I don't work, I don't get paid. If I don't have an active house project, I don't get paid. At the end of my first pregnancy, I had to slow down, then I gave birth and had a little baby. Childcare is a logistical nightmare for people who work random inconsistent hours. I took my baby with me a first, but it was so hard and so unprofessional. My husband just went right back to work, working 40-50hrs. His career progressed, mine was hard to navigate with a baby, then harder again with a toddler and baby.
- I have not had these circumstances happen to me (yet). I hope PFML becomes a reality because I, like everyone, will need to care for myself or a loved one some day and livelihoods ought to be protected. I pay a high percentage for disability insurance each pay check just in case, but this is not the same as PFML and does not cover all reasons for leave.
- I have always had the benefit of a family safety net, even when I was living close to the bone for many years, so I'm one of the lucky ones. It's insane that our rich country doesn't provide family leave for everyone.
- I received short-term disability for 6 weeks of my maternity leave which covered 60% of my pay. The remaining 6 weeks I was allotted required I use PTO, which I spread across those weeks to get paid 2-3 days / week. I know many are not as fortunate as me.
- Would have loved to take a full year off after giving birth.
- I had expected to be unemployed when my child was born, but I had to return to work because I had to become major or sole breadwinner.

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- I took 8 weeks maternity leave. I used your 4 weeks PTO and took 4 weeks without pay which is a lot when you don't earn much as a single mother.
- I worked as an Ed Tech when I was pregnant with my first child. I had him in July, while we were on summer break. When I spoke to my employer, a lot of my 6 weeks were my summer holiday. I went back to work part-time instead of full time because I wanted more time with my baby. I left to become a stay at home parent after covid because it made more sense for my partner and I.
- I could not take more than 12 weeks of maternity leave or my employer would stop paying their share of my health insurance
- Took care of my father and mother who each had cancer. My father died 6 months after diagnosis. Two years later my mother was diagnosed with cancer and died suddenly 4 months after diagnosis. In the same week I lost my mother I lost a pregnancy.
- Quit my high paying job after neonatal demise of my baby due to preterm delivery. Accepted a much more low paying job with zero benefits because it accommodates me in the grieving process I'm still working through.
- We moved closer to my elderly parents, from SOPO to Fort Kent, several years ago to help with care and emotional support due to my dad being terminally ill. (2) After a serious ankle fx and surgery, while being self employed I found myself having to return to work while still recovering and rehabilitating. I was self employed FT at that time and this part of our household income could not wait for a full recovery.
- My employer values time off and provides paid time off. I was allowed 12 weeks maternity leave but I used disability and all of my earned time so it could all be paid.
- I believe in supporting families. Paid leave is essential for everyone.
- It is sad that in our country we have to choose between returning to work to earn money to support our families after giving birth or stay home and nurture, bond with and heal our bodies as well as our babies. I experienced an induction, 40+ hour labor with 6 hours of active pushing and suffered 3rd degree tears. The thought returning to work before 12 weeks (this should be the bare minimum) absolutely astonished me. We need time to heal and foster positive growth, bonds and routines with our children. This will support the development of active, fruitful and contributing adults to our economy and society. Put in the work now for a better outcome.
- I was fortunate to be paid through my maternity leave. It was such a relief and everyone deserves that
- My husband was unemployed when I had our twins, and so I had to go back to work after 9 weeks. It was really hard financially and just as we got to desperation months later, my husband did get a job. This was in 2012 in MA.
- I've had two children, and the second was born two months early, so I had to take my leave to be with him in the hospital early. I had to start working before he'd reached his due date, and while I had an understanding employer, I did wind up with unpaid leave and was back to work much earlier than I was comfortable, since my son needed a lot more early care.

For both children we benefitted from having family nearby when they were born, so they helped with childcare the first 18 months. I may have left my work if that wasn't the case due to cost and worry about early childcare, especially for my child born early since his immune system wasn't developed fully then.

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- I work for a large employer with a substantial leave policy, but recognize that most others do not have that access.
- I struggle with my mental health and feel a lot of guilt about taking time away from work. I often go into work because I work with people who need my support, but I know I need to take care of myself before I can take care of others.
- I am given 10 PTO days per year.- 5 of unused can be carried over into the next year I used those for my time off with both my miscarriage and after I delivered.
- For my dad's serious illness, which has been ongoing for years now, I've had to just take my own paid time off in my current job. My last job I had family medical leave, but wouldn't get paid when I had to be out pertaining to his care, my job was just "protected" when I had to do so. It's a broken system_

When I had my daughter I was out for twelve weeks, had saved enough to get by, but had unpaid leave. Again, merely my job was "protected" but I had no actual paid vacations for years due to my dad's health and childbirth. Again, a horrible system, when those who need a mental break the most cannot take it due to financial restraints and lack of systemic financial support.

- My sick leave has a slow accrual rate, so I had to really think about how injured/sick I was and if it would noticeably impact my job performance because I don't have a lot to lose. On a day where I was so sick that getting out of bed was hard, I called out. In a day where if I took enough medicine I could function, even if it wasn't great, I went into work.
- I've left jobs to be a SAHM but it meant taking on lots of debt. I also left a job to care for my dad because I was allowed time off (and Bc I was a newer employee did not qualify for FMLA)
- There should be leave for miscarriage
- Per diem RN, ran out of PTO. Returned to work after 10 weeks.
- Both myself and a parent (not in this state) have struggled with health issues in the past and I had to take unpaid time off to deal with it. It's been an issue with every job I've ever had. My current job lays me off one month out of the year to keep me as a seasonal employee and not allow benefits including no sick pay. The pay is also very low for the quality of work and having a masters degree in the field of work. This has been an issue at many nonprofit organizations I've worked for. They take advantage of you if you care about the type of work you're doing. I recently had Lyme disease and couldn't work due to a fever that lasted a few days. No sick pay. Wasn't allowed to be in due to work regulations of not coming in with a fever but no pay.
- I took 16 weeks of paid leave with my first and second child which was offered by my employer. For healing alone I needed the first month and a half to two months. Even after 16 weeks I continued to pump during work so was less productive at work as compared to pre-baby for about a year.
- With my first birth, I was living in a state that ensured short-term disability for postpartum leave. I have never had paid time leave other than ST disability, which meant that I was not able to take sick time during my pregnancies as every day off would be a day away from my babies.
- I have worked on part-time contract since my daughters were born and their father has been the primary income earner in our household, giving me this flexibility.
- I was incredibly lucky to have an employer who kept me in my position longer than she needed to when I was recovering from surgery and a post-op infection. She also gave me more time after I had my 2nd baby. I don't know how I could have functioned returning to work any

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sooner. I was also incredibly lucky to have a partner whose wages could cover my lost wages. I honestly don't know how people do it without financial security or supportive employers.

- I was able to use sick time after my miscarriage, but was worried about using too much PTO due to COVID and concerns with what would happen if I became ill so went back to work before I was really ready.
- My school offers sick pay but there are exclusion such as maternity leave. Even if you have enough time to cover your leave in a bank, you are only allowed to use 6 weeks. And if you give birth in the summer you then aren't allowed to use your bank time to cover time in the fall because your six weeks is up.
- Health needs of immediate family members or my own have caused me to have to work when I should be caring for a family member, or resting myself. They have also caused me to leave the job market or seek out temporary instead of permanent jobs. Sometimes I've had to work 10-20 hours per day and also have been sick myself or been caring for a sick spouse or child with no support during non-working hours. The cumulative toll of too much paid and unpaid work and the instability of not being able to keep a permanent position has probably caused me to have chronic health problems.
- My leave only covers medical leave for me or spouse or child, I could not take my paid leave to help my disabled mother with her broken leg even though she lives with me and I provide over 1/2 of her living expenses and support. This caused me to have a mental break down which required me to need 2 weeks home, when if I was given the time right when she broke it and it was paid I would have had the ability to set things up for her in 1 week. It was great for my surgery, though. We also got covid-19 and were not paid but required to stay home for 2 weeks.
- "I was injured at work and had to take time off for a concussion, unpaid. I'm self-employed so I didn't have workers comp even though the accident wasn't my fault (and that shouldn't be a factor anyway).

My partner is pregnant and without her little bit of paid family leave, our postpartum chapter would be extremely stressful. We recently sold our house to make enough money to support a family leave. It's sad that a "windfall" like that has to be used because the US lacks the same supports that every other first world country provides."

- i wasn't given any paid time after giving birth. decided not to go back because i didn't make enough \$\$\$ to justify paying for daycare
- I ran out of sick days for each of my children (I have 4) so with each I went back at 6 weeks so that I didn't lose too much income.
With #4 I had severe postpartum depression but couldn't take off more than 2 extra weeks again because I didn't have sick days to cover it.
- There is a lot of pressure to get back to work after having a baby or taking care of a sick family member- even if you are 'given' the time through STD.
- I suffered terrible post partum anxiety and trauma post birth but has to return after 6 weeks to retain my paycheck
- My current job has flexible hours that allowed me to provide care for a family member, but I was still working while providing care.
- When you had my daughter (on a Saturday,) my husband went right back to work on Monday. My mental health suffered 100%. I was not working at the time- I had been working seasonally and could not find a job while pregnant.
My father was very sick from lung cancer, and I had to try to care for him and work. It was

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emotionally exhausting, and I wish I had more time for him before he died, but I needed an income.

- I'm retired, but I feel this is an important issue for all who may have to take time from work to care for family members.
- My company provides short-term disability coverage. During my several-month illness and treatment, short-term disability coverage covered my pay.
- I took 4 months of maternity leave and collected SDI from the state of California for the first 8 weeks of that time. I had paid into that system as an employee.
- I would have preferred to stay home longer with my babies (I have two sons), but I could not afford to, and have always regretted that I did not get to hold my babies longer before they went to day care all day, without me.
- I had twins which made it even more difficult not to return to work despite needing extra time since I was dealing with 2 babies!
- I'm generally able to take the time I need, but I bumped up against my employer's STD cap (at 26 weeks) at one point, and went back to work half days, and used accrued PTO to cover the other half of the day... I did that for a couple of weeks (when I really should be been home), because it seemed easier than applying for Federal LTD coverage just to stay out for an extra week or two.
- I have an autoimmune disease that makes it difficult for me to work regularly. Given it's chronic nature, I continue to work as scheduled despite any flares as they happen, because I need the income.

I did, once, leave a business that I ran with my ex-wife, a prominent healing arts business in Portland, because I was leaving my marriage as a necessary act of fleeing abuse. I stayed running the business while being abused there by my then-spouse because it was my source of income. Eventually I left, which significantly impacted my income as a self-employed person who then had to establish a client base in a new place outside of Portland.

- It's very hard to receive disability benefits with a hidden and/or chronic illness/disability. If you're okay sometimes, but not others, there are no job opportunities available to you except freelance work. When I have been employed by others, I have never been able to take the time off that I need to recover from my illness cycles and being self-employed does not bring in enough income nor does it allow me to afford health insurance. Paid time off would really help people like me, in addition to free public healthcare (medicaid expansion) and expanding access to disability benefits.
- When I gave birth to my son, without access to paid medical or family leave, I was forced to go back to work after only three weeks. I've lost a pregnancy and been unable to take time off from work. I have and continue to deal with emotional abuse at home and not had enough paid time off. I had to leave my last two jobs because of my inability to juggle working in order to get paid and being home when my disabled mom came to live with us; when my husband was diagnosed with cancer and had to have multiple surgeries and also when my son became a victim of sexual assault at the hands of his day care. I did not have access to paid family or medical leave and did not have enough accrued paid time off to cover the time needed for these events. This was especially tough during COVID, when I had to take time off work every time my son was ill with a cold and had to be sent home from daycare. When we had to pull my son out of daycare because of the assault, I had no choice but to leave my job because they did not allow me to work from home and I had no access to paid family or medical leave. I put off my

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own medical care and surgeries that I need because I don't have the paid time off needed to cover my pay for those events.

- Currently 4 weeks postpartum with babe #4, plan is to take off 12 weeks. Saved as much PTO this year as I could to be able to get paid a little during that time. Used 2 full weeks then receive short term disability for 4 weeks at 60%. Have 3 weeks of PTO left to spread until February. It's already been rough with the timing with Christmas, extreme oil and gas prices, paying for a daycare spot and surprise car repairs. I may need to go back earlier to get paid and not get behind in bills.
- My employer does provide FMLA and I have taken this for recovery from pregnancy and bonding but I did feel that it was hard to access and when you take it you are truly meant to fully take large chunks of time off. Otherwise you are encouraged to use PTO. My mother got very sick while I was in my third trimester and I felt that I had to use PTO or work remotely while caring for her because I knew that I needed to conserve my PTO to ensure that I could maintain full salary during my leave. If I had known that I had such limited time left with her I would have taken much more leave and not try and balance my work. If there had been an option to take intermittent leave to care for her on an as-needed basis that would have been so helpful. She ended up on hospice and though we do receive 3 days of bereavement, to have to be using PTO to sit by my mom's bedside even with my employers full support it put a burden on me to even be worrying if I was going to have enough PTO to not take too much of a pay cut during my leave. Flexibility is key. Also, because of a misunderstanding of my start date, I received a warning that my job would be terminated because I hadn't returned by some date in the algorithm. We were able to scramble and fix it, but my benefits would have been cut as well. At the point I was meant to return, the pandemic had just begun and with so many unknowns I had a newborn and two other kids at home to be caring for and no PTO or leave remaining the only choice was to go back to work and take care of kids as well.
- I took time off in between jobs to have children. While I was out, I had cancer and my son had surgery. I was thankful I wasn't working so I could be there, but it was very hard without the income. I ended up Rtw. When my mom needed care and passed recently I was fortunate to work for a company that allowed me to flex my time, use pto and have a bereavement leave. PFML would have been easier to be there for my family. It also impacted my PTO which is my vacation time, so I was limited on other time off I could take this year. I had to choose between supporting my mom while she died and vacation later in the year.
- I ended up with undiagnosed post parturition depression and came close to killing myself and my baby but had to keep working.
- Caring for an ill parent was emotionally and physically exhausting while still holding down a full time job.
- It would have been nice to have 6 months of paid leave for giving birth
- My injury occurred in mid-2020 and I was only able to continue working because I could work from home at that time. If that hadn't been an option, I would have had to miss work for longer and I would have lost income.
- I believe paid medical family leave is vital for working people when any of the above situations occur., especially for those who do not have adequate health insurance
- I had a micropreemie (24 weeks) who was in the NICU for 5 months. When he came home he was on oxygen and several medications. I had to take 4 weeks off after his birth and then I took my remaining 8 weeks after he was discharged. Those 8 weeks were unpaid.

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We now have excellent parent time off but not family time off.

- I work for a public school system and my maternity leave was 6 weeks unpaid from the day of birth! It is paid time if you use your accumulated sick days, which I had about 20 (this is after 3+ years of employment and never missing work). Then, return with a 6 week old newborn, recovering from birth, with no sick time?! The pandemic happened and I was able to work from home longer than expected, thankfully. But this expectation for new mothers is abhorrent and, in my opinion, dehumanizing and completely unrealistic.
- Due with my first child in January, grateful for my savings account because the leave benefits are awful. Really wish I didn't have to decide between caring for my baby in the first 12 weeks of life and securing my job.
- I would take more time but I'll risk looking my job
- I became a stay at home parent after getting pregnant and having severe morning sickness. I would have likely chosen this regardless, but perhaps not as quickly.
- Company had mandatory short term disability
- I have a minimal to no PTO balance because of Covid related daycare protocols and quarantining so if we have another child we will likely have a completely unpaid maternity leave. It's really stressful to consider how we'll make it work and a large factor in our family planning decision.
- I took a leave when my daughter was born but it definitely didn't feel like enough. It was partially paid but not fully.
- Supporting care for terminally ill family member and was off for two months. Moved out of my apt to afford doing such and was essentially homeless.
- I've had two children. The first time i went back to work at 11 weeks and it felt way too soon. We had no paid FMLA except what an employee had for sick time. The second time i took 6 months off and I think 2 weeks were paid by my employer. I also had two weeks paid by short term disability plan that i pay for. Rushing new parents back to work is a terrible thing. A lot of people are sleep deprived and dealing with medical or mental health issues while they adapt to parenting. Adding financial stress to that makes it that much more difficult. Several of my coworkers have quit after having kids
- No person should have to decide weather working Sick or taking care of a sick loved one is equal to paycheck lost or earned. I was so blessed to work for an employer and system that covered me through most of the premature birth of my child, both parents deaths no my recent husbands life threatening illness. However, longevity of work in the one system was the needed extra clout I had of saved absences over the years. If I was a new employee during any of these events, I was screwed!
- Between being the primary earner during two pregnancies, then a single parent, then a domestic violence survivor, and now having a chronic illness while raising my 7 and 11 year old children there have been many times where I had to choose work over health or else I was faced with an even harder choice such as food over heat. I have gone days without heat because it meant food on the table and during some of my most difficult times I relied solely on food pantries for all my food and heating assistance because I was unable to work due to illness. Recently my son was diagnosed with a brain tumor, which was removed in early November at a hospital in Boston. My family had to rely on support from our community, mostly through a GoFundMe account, in order for us to be able to make it to that surgery for him. Due to the nature of my contract work, which allows me the flexibility to be there for my kids and support

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my own health needs, there was no income for our family at a time when we needed it most. I consider myself lucky that we had that community support, but also incredibly frustrated that it was needed due to a lack of formal social service program support within our society. Parents dealing with health crises with their children shouldn't be worried about the gas to get to a hospital or how to afford food during the hospital stay.

- Had built up earned time to use for some of my time off, but a lot unpaid. Recent surgery that was rescheduled a week and a half later. Couldn't return to work without note from surgeon but received too late and processed too late by HR so out a total of a month, not enough earned time, some leave unpaid.
- The lack of paid family leave enrages me.
- My employer just increased the paid leave but we only get 4 weeks at 100% pay and that's after 2 weeks of PTO and 4 weeks of STD at 60% and the other 40% is our PTO. It essentially only covered ~10 weeks and that's if you have enough saved time. I had to go unpaid for the last 2 weeks of 12 weeks total taken. I feel fortunate to have had the time but it empty's my PTO and well kids get sick and with my first I had to take to take additional time after 6 months postpartum. I had no earn time.
- I have had two full term pregnancies. With my first, I could only take a few weeks, with my second, I took the full 12 weeks but I really had to save all of my PTO for years
- I have to use all my accrued PTO in order to take off time
- I'm seriously injured from domestic assault. I have not been able to get the medical care I need. I had to go back to work because I don't have money or help from family. My ex has connections with the local hospital, he is there hairdresser and they have covered medical records. This has been a nightmare.
- I had a leave of absence and used my vacation time and protected time off for pay until it ran out.
- I broke my wrist at work and had to have 2 operations. I went back to work as soon as I could.
- For each of my parents I was able to take days off to drive them to medical appointments and other things when they were in declining health.
- Now retired
- Yes
- My partner was only able to take one week of paid vacation time after the birth of our child since their company does not offer any family leave.
- I am currently pregnant and I am able to take the time off I need however it will be unpaid and I don't know how long I'll be able to afford to take off
- I recently had to be working from my hospital bed at Mass General Labor and delivery while in serious condition after having multiple surgeries while pregnant.

I would have preferred not to, but I'm work for a small company and don't even qualify for FMLA.

- I was fortunate to take 4 months off after having my son because I saved up over a month of PTO and my husband was working. But he was pressured to go back after two weeks of paternity leave even though he was entitled to more. I was dealing with postpartum issues and really needed him for a few more weeks.

I pushed for my former company to bring in a paid family leave policy after I had an employee who could not afford to take more than two weeks off. She had a traumatic birth experience

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and dealt with post-partum depression. This was before Covid-19 and I made a semi-secret deal with her that she could work from home for a few months and work when she could, even if it was a couple hours per day. I was so upset with HR's response when I brought up paid leave that I didn't care what happened with my job. Two years later they finally adopted my proposal, but cut it back from 12 weeks of full pay to 8.

I loved abroad with my husband before having kids and our only regret sometimes is that we did not have our child in his home country. I would have had access to 6 months of 80% pay and he would have a month of full pay.

- I have taken time for two pregnancy losses - took the minimum off to heal physically but was not ready emotionally and went back anyway (self-employed, felt responsible for my business and no paid time off). Also took FMLA time after the birth of my daughter. Was an employee then. Took 12 unpaid weeks off and could just barely afford it (few hundred dollars in my bank account the week I went back)
- I didn't have leave when my child was born and I lost my job because I took unpaid time off. I had a stroke and maxed out my two weeks of paid time off then was laid off because I couldn't come back to work.
- After giving birth to each of my 3 babies, I drained my earned time off and was forced to take unpaid time off with 2 of the 3. This was a financial hardship for my family, but it was important to me to be able to bond with my babies and establish breastfeeding.
- The first three months postpartum I was paid away from work. Mostly with my accrued PTO. Around 6 months (three months back at work with little ones) each time I started to fall into some post partum depression. This time I am going to just go per diem at my job. I am a nurse and I know there is a healthcare worker shortage, but I need to be with my family. With my first son I had postpartum depression for his 6 months-18 months. That was horrible. I still feel badly looking back at pictures of that time and it still governs how I interact with him today. I am in therapy about it, but I still need more help. I don't want to do that again.
- As an employed physician, it was extremely difficult for me to take adequate time around both of my children's birth. At my first job, I was the primary wage earner and insurance holder in the house. I was told that I could take as much time off as I needed, but none of it was paid. I worked up until the day before I delivered, including making up call from the time I took off -- and had to return at 8 weeks. My child did not sleep, my husband was mentally ill and hospitalized, and my life was stressed to the max. I remember that time as horrible -- there was no enjoyment, no ability to focus adequately on anything. In retrospect, I am sure I gave inadequate patient care -- and I was unable to truly focus on my child.

For my second child, I was able to take up to six weeks of partially paid time off. However, since I was paid based on RVUs, essentially, this was lost revenue. I ultimately saved my vacation for a whole year, and was able to take 12 weeks off, total. When I returned to work, exhausted (my second child had special needs), I was again beyond stressed.

At both jobs, I was told that I could pump whenever I needed to -- but it was then up to me to work time into my schedule between patients and I was not given a private location to pump. My physician partner had to endure my pumping in between patients for nine months -- at both jobs. Zero privacy.

These experiences were inhumane, uncaring, and ultimately put both organizations at risk by employing a sleep deprived physician, with no accommodations for post-natal care. There was no joy in either of these experiences. If I had been able to quit my job, I would have in a heartbeat.

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- I was able to take time off due to benefits that I have with my employer, some of that was long and short term disability benefits that I earned.
- I was lucky to receive some paid leave from my former employer, but it was not enough and I had to go back to work before I was ready. Now, I have delayed having another child because my current employer does not offer any paid leave and I cannot afford to not get paid.
- I have mental health illnesses that I have been aware of for over 20 years. Most of the time I can work, excelling at my job without issue, however, much like diabetes, I need to take daily medications. My doctor's visits have been mostly medication management for a very long time, since I am mostly stable. Periodically, I have had problems with generic medications where the company has changed my chemistry enough to cause interruption in my work. It usually takes a month or so to get everything changed over to brand and then to get the medications to work well. In the past when I was an hourly employee, I would use my sick time and have to take unpaid (my boss at the time refused to let me use vacation earned). The only option was to use FMLA unpaid in order to keep my benefits. I applied for FMLA but really couldn't afford to get into it too far because I needed the pay. I'm salaried now, thankfully, and luckily I have an excellent supervisor but I don't have any hesitation to say that I work in the University of Maine System. They are severely behind the times.
- Only a day or two with lost pregnancy; with child children, I was only able to afford to take 8 weeks using short-term disability (reduced pay) and then accumulated sick time (half pay).
- I took time off with FMLA, but it was unpaid. I had to use my sick and vacation time. When I had to go back to work, I was not ready - but I needed money and could have lost my job if I did not return. I tried to return part time, but my employer was incredibly difficult and inflexible.
- I had major surgery that would have best benefited from a six-week recovery, however, I had to take only four weeks in order to resume my full pay and not lose my job. I was on short-term disability at 60% my normal pay.
- My child was born in during my seventh year of employment in a professional role requiring advanced degrees, in a branch of Maine state government. For several years, I banked and saved as much PTO as possible for maternity leave. My biweekly sick and vacation time accrual rates were 3.7 and 4.7 hours, respectively. I scheduled medical visits after work hours, missed family functions, and worked sick. I scheduled my labor induction for after 5pm so that I could work a full day.

I also scoured every internal policy and federal regulation regarding FMLA and maternity leave. I was eligible for 12 weeks of leave unpaid, but could use my accrued PTO until it ran out. When my PTO ran out, I would be responsible for reimbursing the state for my family's health insurance costs or risk losing coverage with an infant. So, I budgeted for that, too.

While turning in my FMLA paperwork a few weeks before my due date, I had a conversation with my HR rep that I will never forget. She informed me that I should feel very lucky to get these 12 weeks "off". I replied that a government agency's compliance with the bare minimum FMLA requirements was not something that engendered gratitude.

While out on FMLA, I sent in my back-to-work clearance with a date calculated using the language laid out in the union contract and internal policies. The HR rep denied my back-to-work date because she was unfamiliar with the contract language and presented a different date that would have had me back in the office several days earlier than I was entitled to. While sitting

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with my 8-week-old baby in my arms, I was in tears while having to engage in a protracted discussion with HR, where they finally conceded that my original calculations were correct. I then asked how many other personnel had their FMLA leave curtailed because of this misunderstanding. I was met with silence.

I went back to work: sleep deprived, physically exhausted, and terrified that my infant would catch something at daycare and that I wouldn't have the PTO to be able take care of my baby. My coworkers were kind, but the policies were set in stone. So, I white-knuckled it. I put my nose to the grindstone and I cried in my car during lunch breaks. I had post-partum depression and never told anyone how I was feeling because I was afraid of having to miss work. I was one of the very lucky ones, and it was a nightmare.

I had a full time job doing work that I loved, had benefits and was eligible for FMLA. My saved PTO got me 9 weeks paid leave and I took the final 3 weeks unpaid I have a family support network. I have a husband who works full time. I see women returning to work within a week of giving birth because their families cannot afford lost wages and no PTO is available. I see women losing their jobs because they were put on bed rest. I see parents losing. I see children losing. This system is broken, disincentives having children, and it hurts children and families. If Maine wants a healthy, committed, and vibrant workforce, we need paid Family Leave.

- Close contact w/COVID case, was told by supervisor and HR to report to work or lose vacation time since FFCRA/CARES Act had expired.
- I had to go back to full-time work when my baby was four months old and I was not ready and didn't have good childcare solutions for her so it was very hard and stressful and eventually influenced my decision to leave that position years later.
- I am half-way through my parental leave from work, 5 weeks paid, 5 weeks unpaid. I can't imagine trying to work full-time and raise a newborn at the same time. My wife is taking time away from work unpaid. We are lucky to have enough savings to make it work. Every family deserves paid leave.
- I was very fortunate to be paid 100% of my wages for my first maternity leave - 3 months paid in full. That was because I worked for a wonderful small business that made it a priority to support its staff. My current job is not as generous and I will have to go on short term disability and be paid 2/3 my pay for a maximum of 3 months.
- I traveled to South Carolina to help my dying grandmother with dementia in January 2021. Putting my business on hold for about 6 weeks was difficult, but worth it.
- I was paid a portion of my pay using short term disability.
- We emptied our savings account in order to survive and live as a family after having our son in October 2020.
- "earlier in my life i was not able to get paid for family leave after having a second child. More recently, I've been able to take sick time ignorer to care for dying parents as well as recover from a surgery."
- I was a student
- I could not still have my job if they didn't offer at least some paid family leave. As much as my immediate supervisor and manager value the work I do and value me as an employee, if the larger system I work within didn't have paid time I would likely have lost my job at least twice over for taking the time I literally could not work. I may not have taken quite as much as I felt I

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needed every time, but at least I could take time at the very worst of it. In early 2020 I got sick, with what I am pretty sure was COVID-19, and the entire rest of my four person household (at that time) became sick as well. For nearly a week, none of us could make it to the grocery store to get more food, much less to work. Friends dropped soup at the end of the driveway, and we took turns going to collect it every couple days. We were all young, healthy people - I cannot imagine how folks without paid leave, or with underlying health conditions, or with small children, elders, or immune-compromised folks to care for aside from themselves could manage if they were that sick. Really, I know many did not manage, and that is why we have had so many deaths in this country this year. We will continue to be hit economically as a state and as a country every time there is a pandemic, and they will only get more frequent. The daily and expected trials were damaging enough to individual families, but an epidemic or a pandemic will impact whole communities, hard, all at once, and in our relatively poor, rural state (not like rural folks can easily get food delivery when we are too sick to drive, even if we could all afford it) we absolutely must have paid sick and family leave if we are going to manage.

- I lost a pregnancy last summer, and was not able to take any time off from work to grieve my loss and the changes to my body and hormones. When I shared the news with my job, I was not met with any empathy or understanding - only skepticism that I was not committed to my work.

- I had to take a medical leave of absence this year for my job that is still based in New York, and I am so grateful that I was able to receive 12 weeks of fully paid medical leave. After 12 weeks, I was still not fully recovered from my illness and had no other choice but to return to work, as any remaining leave would be unpaid and I can't afford to do that.

- I have seen how pregnancy and childbirth can be traumatic, and the many complications that can result from having a child. I think it is shameful that the US is the only nation in the developed world that doesn't have comprehensive paid family leave for its families, especially in a government and society that claims to be pro-family. The millennial and Gen Z generations are the most in-debt generation we've ever had. Birth rates are declining. People are firmly deciding not to have children. The reasons for that are a combination of overwhelming debt, climate change, and workplaces and policies that have archaic structures that don't support two working parents or single parents. It's time to pass Paid Family Leave now for all Mainers and all Americans.

- I have been fortunate to have flexible work and a family safety net that allowed me to take the time I needed, both for myself and as a caregiver. Having that time without the stress of needing to be paid or fear of losing my job was critical to my rapid recovery.
- Currently, have a child sick with COVID and have had to take ten days away from work which is unpaid. I don't know how essential bills will be paid next month. I have an older child who is disabled. Both of my children also share a diagnosis of autism. Life is hard right now.
- I own a small auto repair business w/4 employees
- My work allows me to use paid leave for medical appointments as well as illness and injury. This has been invaluable.
- The only time I've ever had paid time off was when I worked for the New York City Department of Ed as a member of the New York City Teaching Fellows program. I left my work

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there when my graduate program ending coincided with major family realizations, a global pandemic, and the ending of a 7-year long relationship. Since returning home to Maine I have felt I needed to take a break from teaching until I complete my Maine state licensure. Just like when I was 15, up to 27, I am working 3 jobs and always working at my photography on top of it just to make ends meet, and I still can just barely cover my living expenses. I have diagnosed ADHD, and struggle with anxiety and depression. Every job I've ever had in Maine has had no paid leave. Some would give me time off as needed for illness or to care for my mental health, but it's never paid. Which I had 1 personal day per month I could use in the DOE.

- I hurt my back in 2007 when I worked as an EMT and I was let go
- Myocarditis from the vax, have been out of work for the last 3 months, all unpaid. Full time student as well, no change to my schedule there. PTO should be mandatory, at the very least for medical disorders.
- I used pto to cover the allowed FMLA time, which is definitely not enough to recover from childbirth and care for a newborn. And I had to save my leave for years.
- Luckily my boss that the time allowed me to work from home part time, and be in the office part time. It allowed me to be with my baby more. But that was a boss policy, not an employee policy.
- Human moms are often expected to have LESS time with their new babies than is mandated for new kittens and puppies going to new homes after birth. How is that real life.
- I was able to use sick time.
- Several years ago I was very sick but avoided taking time off because I couldn't afford to lose income. The unaddressed issue progressed and I ended up on unpaid FMLA. That transitioned to short term disability which was paid but only at a portion of my income, which was a huge financial struggle. The employer also seemed very irritated at my need for time off and offered little support for the FMLA and STD processes.
- Used vacation payout from previous employer to take some time off from contract work
- Low pay rates and high costs of living for a single parent are incompatible and harmful to our children.
- Initially when I worked for the hospital I had sick, vacation and holiday accruals. At that time you had to be out 6 months before you would qualify for long term disability. Over the course of my tenure at the hospital I was able to get a 1000 hours plus of sick time. I had enough to pay me to be out for 3 months for the birth of my son. I also was able to use my sick time for other surgeries etc. Before I left they took our sick time away and gave us only 5 days per year. It was a rolling calander year and if you had more than 5 occurrences in six months you could be fired.

The way business treat sick time these days is that it counts against you. How can I feel comfortable calling out when they say it is an "unexcused absence" because they are counting on us being there. Why would I want to take a sick day when it is going to count against me.

My exhusband never got any sick pay ever. He would do his best not to call out sick and when we used his disability insurance for about a month he was only getting a \$125 a week before taxes. He did piece meal work so he was always conscious of how much he had to do in order to bring home as much money as he could. Eventually the business was sold and every job he had after that also did not give any sick pay/leave.

Another friend of mine had a reaction to an antibiotic that he was taking for an infection and he

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ended up having to be out for over two weeks and he was let go.

It will then be that businesses under a certain number of employees will not be included in this. It has to be everybody.

The last thing I will say is that you now get penalized for going home sick if you leave early. A common phrase I hear when someone goes to their boss and states they need to go home because they don't feel well "I cannot tell you that you cannot go home." If someone comes to me and tells me that they need to go home because they are not feeling well I tell them to go home regardless. Frankly I do not think the corporate world wants paid leave given the last 30-40 years.

I knew a friend who had their own business and they stated that she would not pay her employees if they called out sick. When I told her that my husband didn't get paid when he called out she stated it made her think that she was mirroring the same pattern.

- I saved up for my anticipated maternity leave, fortunate it happen when business was well established
- fortunately I've had paid leave since graduating from college & going to work.
- I wasn't working when I gave birth- my partner was working and I was able to stay home with my baby- which is what I wanted.

When I was experiencing domestic violence, I didn't even consider taking time off. I was the only person working with a young child. Paid time off would have been a gift.

Also, it wasn't listed, but I had to take time off at the beginning of COVID because there was no in-person school and no other person available to watch my child.

- After giving birth I only had 4 weeks of paid time off, so I went two extra weeks unpaid, and then put my infant in daycare and went back to work, even though I was suffering from post partum depression which required therapy and meds. I have aging parents and at some point in the next ten years I know I may have to care for one or both.
- I was a preschool teacher when I gave birth to my son. He was born in August and I went back to work in December. I felt lucky to have that time at home but it was UNPAID because my husband's income made it so we could survive without my income.
- There is a tremendous amount of pressure when only one adult is working in the home but my spouse is recovering from the loss of their job, mental health stabilization and alcoholism. I feel burnt out and do have some paid time off but I'd need a month off in order to recover my own health and it doesn't seem possible unless I want to give up my job.
- I have had a lot of experience with FMLA. When I worked at AAA Northern New England I had to use FMLA after my emergency c-section. This company was great about my leave but it wasn't really enough to recover from the c-section and I needed to get back to work. When my paid leave ran out I went back earlier than my doctor wanted.

I had 2 more c-sections, both planned over the course of a decade. Both times I was working in a management position at Dunkin Donuts. What a joke that was. No paid leave, but the boss was willing to make me a 'loan' until I got on my feet.

I have a son with special needs that are pretty demanding and work was never the same again. I

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have been treated like a second class citizen in several jobs until I decided I would just work for myself.

- I was diagnosed with lymphoma and had a stem cell transplant. I was able to take FML but I was not paid for my absence.
- I went back to work sick because of pressure from my employer and consequently got my coworkers sick. I've also gotten sick because my coworkers came to work and spread and infection.
- When my grandmother was sick, I had a part time job. It lasted for about two months with her in and out of the hospital before we figured out what was wrong so I became her full time caretaker. I had some family who could be with her when I had my shifts at a local gift shop where I made minimum wage (non-tipping) in NYS for 2018. It would have been nice to take off time but I couldn't because I was trying to save for my first apartment. I was still living with my dad at the time (and ended up staying with my grandma after a while).

When I had surgery (double mastectomy) I took off a week and went back to work the following. I didn't feel like I could take off that much time because I wasn't getting any paid time off.

- I'm self employed so made it up on other days.
- At some jobs, the time off is from vacation time, not sick time. So yes we had access to vacation time_ but used it for sick time.
- My social work job provides a great deal of paid time off. Through Covid, due to staffing shortages, there have been times where taking time off would be difficult.
- If my company didn't have a paid leave program which allowed me to take the time I needed to address some mental health issues I would be in a significantly worse place than I am now, to the point i may not have been here to take this survey.
- During my first pregnancy, I had to leave my job, because my salary would not cover the cost of child care. After delivering my second child, by c-section, I could not follow the advice of my doctor (ie not driving or picking up my toddler for six weeks) and I could not properly recover from my surgery, because my husband was not offered enough paid leave to care for me and our children while I recuperated.
- My daughter has needed a lot of care, including several weeks in an out-of-state residential program, in the last year as the result of an eating disorder. I was able to take a little time off but nowhere near what would have been best for our family.
- I was working full time when I had my children. I got 13 weeks (1 week s/t disability + 12 weeks FMLA) for each of my 2 births. I was able to take them fully (or almost fully) paid but had to burn through all my sick and vacation time. Was definitely not feeling ready to return to work after either, especially after the 2nd who was not sleeping/ up all night nursing.

With my first I lost a lot of blood and needed a transfusion, and my 2nd was just gigantic (11+ lbs) and had a broken collarbone at birth.

- Regarding paycheck contribution: I'd be comfortable contributing part of my paycheck as a tax, like if it were to help people across the state. I'd be less excited about paying a contribution to my employer because I feel that should be included in the budget and covered by my employer.
- I am a university faculty member. I took care of a family member after her cancer surgery for a couple weeks (for which I was out of state). I didn't need time off because it happened in the

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summer, but if it would have been during the academic year, I would have needed to arrange something with my job. That may have been easier recently anyway when classes were online due to COVID, but in general, I feel like I lucked out because it was summer and I was able to work from that family member's house on class preps and writing while I was there.

- Went back to work two weeks after giving birth due to needing funds
- A few family members that I was very close with passed away and I couldn't afford to take any time off to grieve.
- I was self-employed at the time so I was able to make it work
- For my first child, I was able to take maternity leave for the rest of the school year (April-June). The head of school "generously" allowed me to use accrued sick days to cover the rest of the school year. I was not charged sick days for the summer vacation, and returned to school for the next school year. My daughter was four and a half months old, and while returning to work was very difficult, it was approximately what I had wanted for a maternity leave - a reasonable amount of time off with no loss of salary.

My second childbirth was twins. The head of school "generously" allowed me to use accrued sick days for, if I recall correctly, 10 weeks instead of 6 weeks allowed for "normal" delivery (they talk about vaginal vs c-section, but very awkwardly). Initially I was going to be allowed to use 8 weeks of accrued sick time, but they extended it to 10 weeks, after I cried a fair amount. I will add that all but about two of those weeks were summer vacation, when I would not have been working anyway, which felt rather ridiculous. I ended up returning to work three weeks earlier than originally planned, as I did not want to lose too much income. This led to me returning to work while my babies were younger than I had wanted them to be when I returned to work, as my children were born a full month before their due date; they were four months old when I returned to school, but only three months adjusted.

I was very anxious about this negatively affecting my breastfeeding goals; we had had a slow start to breastfeeding due to a few factors, but through a great deal of determination, I had built up to a decent nursing situation. I was scared that I would lose the ground I'd made up and frustrated that after gradually transitioning from mostly pumping with lots of bottle top-ups to mostly nursing, I would be returning to frequent pumping. It ended up working, but again, that was due largely to my determination and did not work quite ideally.

Ultimately, I did not lose any income from my second maternity leave due to my postpartum mood disorder. Our pediatrician wrote a doctor's note to my HR person explaining my mental health situation, which made it possible for me to use 18 weeks of accrued sick days. If I had not been as depressed and anxious as I was, I would have lost 8 weeks of income because I was "not sick and could not use sick time".

I am aware that I was better positioned than many new parents, but I take that as a sign that our society does a lousy job of parental leave, not that my situation was really good. Had I not been very healthy for eight years in the same job prior to my first pregnancy, I would not have had nearly as many accumulated sick days as I did, such that I wouldn't have been able to take the paid time off that I did. While I was angry that I was limited by my employer about how much of my accumulated sick days I could use, I was also aware that had I been in my second year of teaching there, I'd have only had six weeks total accumulated anyway, so being permitted or not to use more than six weeks for my "normal" birth (I still find their description of vaginal deliveries as normal off-putting). I don't really remember how I was doing six weeks after either childbirth, because I was in an exhausted daze. I had just recently stopped bleeding.

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- I was able to take the full 12 weeks of unpaid FMLA for the birth of my daughter but it cost me \$5000 out of my savings. I also took time when my father was home for hospice and because I was out of vacation time, I was not paid.
- After giving birth to my first child, I had to go back to work even though we didn't have access to child-care because of the shortage of childcare workers and Covid. It was incredibly stressful to try to manage an infant and a job, despite the option to work remotely. Working remotely still means working, which is not exactly compatible with caring for an infant full time. It was so stressful that I decided to leave my full time job and scale back to part-time self employment. I eventually found another part-time position with a firm and accepted that job for the security it offered over the self employment, however I do not have paid time off nor paid maternity leave, and I am now expecting our second child. (I didn't have paid maternity leave at the previous job either.) Without paid time off, my husband and I are left scrambling when something comes up, like the baby gets sick and can't go to daycare. It is incredibly stressful to try to balance this and makes me question why I decided to become a parent. It feels like parenthood is not valued by our society.
- I took time away from work paid and the benefit ran out so opt to reduce my hours to continuing fostering my grandchildren.
- In particular after I gave birth to my son, c section, and when my husband was in & out of the hospital battling addiction & related physical & mental health problems - I did not have enough paid leave, used up whatever little sick or vacation leave my job provided then either had to work (which I was not mentally or physically ready for, and also incur childcare costs) or take days unpaid. My employer allowed a few days of time unpaid but not much and of course I couldn't afford not to work.
- Very difficult as a single parent to work and address life events such as a child with special needs/disabilities.
- I used FMLA, the 4 weeks parental leave of my employer, and vacation time to cover parental leave - I can't imagine becoming a parent and not having that support
- Currently we own our own business and if we had to stop working everything falls apart.
- I carefully planned for my second pregnancy including saving vacation and sick time I could use to cover my parental leave.
- The challenges, stresses, and cost of parenting are immense. We need paid family leave. Childcare is not only extremely expensive but difficult to find. And children get sick during their first few years. Parents are fatigued and stressed. We treat pregnancy, childbirth, and child rearing as if it's a disease, not an important life event that requires support and nurturing of both the parents and families who are raising children. Without adequate paid family leave, working parents have to use up what little leave they may have and then either be forced to go back to work within a few weeks of giving birth, or take leave without pay, or worse, quit. This is unconscionable and negligible for our society to mistreat working moms, especially since our country is wealthy compared to others in the world that have longer leave and paid leave, up to a year of paid leave. And working conditions for moms are not friendly: Inflexible work schedules, hostile work environments, lack of adequate accommodations to express milk at work are just a few of the working conditions many women experience. Combine that with disruptions in childcare and just the stress and fatigue that working moms are subjected to and it isn't surprising that many take unpaid leave or quit if they can afford it or stay in low wage jobs. This is not conducive to keeping them employed in a career and treating them as valuable contributing members of our society who need support at a time when they are under

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extreme stress. Only the wealthy can afford children, which is a sign of the inequities of our society.

- There is still no family leave policy that provides for paid leave for new parents. We have to cobble it together with sick days and PTO (for those of us who are fortunate to have that baseline). It is endlessly stressful to try to figure out how to take leave from work to care for a new baby without losing your job or pay. It also determines how much/where/whether a parent works at all during those first years. It is an unmitigated nightmare even for the most privileged workers.
- After my first pregnancy, which ended in a c-section and during which I had to be on extended bedrest in the hospital with no paid medical leave, I had no paid maternity leave and had to go back to work after 2 weeks. I was still bleeding with stitches and extremely sore at that time; I could hardly sit up. After my third baby (vaginal delivery) I got 6 weeks paid maternity leave through my employer. I went back to work full time after 8 weeks because I was the only person in the family working (husband in school full time) and couldn't afford more unpaid time off. I was still healing and could not sit comfortably after 8 weeks, and had to pump milk for my infant in a conference room with no privacy and put milk in the shared refrigerator full of rotting food. Later, testing found that 2 children and I all have chronic lyme disease. We are in ongoing treatment for this and it would benefit me to have more time off to deal with medical issues and go to doctor appointments but I just keep working through it because there are no official channels for dealing with this.
- I got mono in my fifties at the end of August. My employer paid for disability and it paid 50% with one week without pay after taking all my sick days and vacation days. I am not back to work full time yet. I was out six weeks. I can handle it financially because my mother died in January and I inherited half of her and my father's 401K. There's no way I could afford to live on my salary, working in education/social services in this area of the country. I have underlying health issues. I have made choices, but my parents and all of my grandparents had better standard of living than I do. One set of grandparents were blue collar, without college education and were able to rent and then buy a 3 family house. I have a master's degree and I could never do that. In my case, it was a choice and I knew my parents had good jobs and invested money inherited from those grandparents. They died without needing any long term care. Ronald Reagan cut subsidized housing by 80% and now look at us.
- I am not a great sample, because I am self-employed with contract-based work that does not include benefits. I also work from home, which affords me more flexibility than most. That said, I believe strongly that parental/family leave should be made available and be affordable. After the birth of our child, my husband was given FIVE days. It wasn't enough time for me to recover from a difficult child birth or for him to have bonding time with our son.
- For one life event, I had a full-time job with short-term disability that partially compensated 6 weeks off. I did not have enough money to take the full 12 weeks allowed by FMLA. For other life events, I have either been a contract worker or self-employed or both. When possible, I needed to plan ahead in order to take some time off and only took off as much time as I could afford. For unexpected events, I could not take off more than a few days.
- I have already had children and do not intend to have more, but I am wildly supportive of families having paid leave and extended leave beyond FMLA to be able to attend to time with growing families and postpartum recovery. I also recognize and support the many other reason that paid family leave would be beneficial to my community, our state and the nation.

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- By planning ahead and having several months living expenses saved up I was able to take the time off. I had to make sacrifices to save up the money but that is part of being a responsible adult.
- Getting your tonsils and adenoids out as an adult and it took six weeks of my life it was awful
- As a single parent, vacation and sick time were my backups. Due to a surgery I was out of work for almost a month. Thankfully because I saved my time off, we still had an income. However now my job no longer allows vacation time to be carried over. I understand not allowing people to hoard vacation time but some of us need this as a safety net. As an early childhood educator, it is hard to take time off if you are in the classroom. Good subs are hard to find and families need the rooms open so they can survive. Hence you often find yourself working sick for that reason as well.
- While I work for a big organization where FMLA applies, I was not paid for my whole leave. I was fortunate to have short-term disability because I had opted in and worked there for more than a year, however that is not the same as full pay and only for 6 weeks (after being mandated to take 2 weeks of sick time before that could even kick in). I was able to work out with my supervisor to take an additional couple of weeks of unpaid time, however that opportunity was only granted because of the grace of a caring supervisor who understood what it is like to be a new mom. It was a financial hardship for our family to do that. It was a very frustrating and confusing time to navigate as well because there was confusing information from different departments at my work. One straightforward statewide policy would simplify things and lead to much less stress for parents. I felt well taken care of in my prenatal care from my providers, but after the baby was born it felt like the wild west. Uncertain leave expectations and uncertainty about daycare - it was very stressful and unsettling to navigate these challenges as a new parent.
- I get two paid sick days a year at one of my jobs and the past two years I've used both for stomach flu and severe migraines. And had to take 2 unpaid sick days on top of that
- It's the hardest thing to go back to work when you haven't healed and you don't want to be torn from your baby because you need money. It's the worst, honestly. And I'm one of the "lucky" ones. It's absolutely ridiculous that paid time is not afforded to new parents for at least 12 weeks. (Even though that is not enough, it's a start).
- My husband used 2 weeks of PTO with our youngest, but I had to have a surgery at 2 weeks post partum which meant he was going back to work while I was still recovering. He used 1 week of PTO with each of our two older kids, which was ok with our first but TOUGH with our second. He definitely missed out on a lot of bonding time, and it was harder for me to recover when I had only a week or two of my husband's help.
- My husband has epilepsy and works part-time. I work just under what my employers insurance considers full-time (38 hrs) so we can both be insured under the ACA marketplace. Recovering from COVID, I returned to my full schedule weeks before doctor recommendations.
- After giving birth, my employer only provides short term disability pay, with a long elimination period - it amounts to very little pay. I ended up coming back part time very early after giving birth. I cried most days. Also my employer did not have a clear understanding of their own policy at the time of hiring, so I was unintentionally misled about the amount of paid time I would receive, and I did not have the opportunity to negotiate.
- I used my vacation time to take care of my mom after she had a hip replacement. I was lucky I had enough time saved up to be able to do so, but it would have been nice if I could have used by sick bank hours or had paid leave available for one to two weeks.

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- I worked for a small employment services agency that didn't have a formal PTO policy in place at the time of my mother's hospice care and eventual death from cancer. I took as much time as I needed, and it was critical to navigating that very difficult time.
- I couldn't afford to take time off of work but it was slightly helpful to work because that kept things normal. I hate working from home with sick children home because I can't be as attentive or nurturing because I'm torn in two directions
- It was extremely difficult to go back to work after having kids. The challenge of finding adorable child care was exceptionally hard, residual with my first in 2012.
- My husband was critically ill and I needed to take 13 weeks off from work. I was able to use my accrued sick leave, was paid in full and kept my health benefits.
- I broke my leg in multiple places and had surgery. I was unpaid during my time off. I had savings and used that to pay for my 2 months off.
- it's hard to take time off of work even with compensation because of the amount that piles up while you're gone
- With my first child I couldn't continue breastfeeding past six months because my I developed low supply. I believe moms should have the opportunity to be at home to nurse for babies first year.

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17. Tell us more [about how you handled or would handle a need for family and medical leave], if you're comfortable doing that. (168 responses)

- We are planning for a second child and feel comfortable doing that because of my organization's generous paid leave time.
- Considering having a second child in the near future.
- Would like more paid time off when I give birth to my first child in April. I will have some paid time off but not enough. The 12 weeks unpaid is not enough and having to use other resources to meet my financial obligations.
- I recently became a grandmother and am reducing my work schedule to care for my grandbaby one day a week. While I am thankful that my job offers voluntarily reducing my hours it is very challenging figuring out how to afford the loss of a day a week's pay. I am considering working extra on the four days I do work...I wish there was family leave allowed for me to watch my grandchild so that my daughter can go back to work.
- I got 14 days paid parental leave with my most recent child, better than none like before. If I have another child my employer now provides 21 days. Helpful, but still not where it should be.
- I anticipate running out of paid time at some point in order to care for elderly family, as I won't always be able to work remotely while there.
- My employer has a very generous paid family and medical policy. It was part of the reason I was attracted to working there.
- I just started my own business and if I end up having to have surgery, get sick, or have to take care of someone, I'm not sure how I would be able to take time away. (Which of course means that I will just make myself more sick by working when I shouldn't...)
- I had a shoulder injury 20 months ago that has still not healed. I have exhaust the PT that my health insurance will pay for. That weekly PT was unpaid leave from work because I was still working over 35 hours and ineligible to use PTO. Eventually my insurance cut me off. So even though frozen shoulder takes an average of 18 months, no longer had access to a physical therapist. Now 6 months later, it has gotten worse, and I am trying to get into my doctor to have it reevaluated, but thanks to my co worker coming in sick, and being told about the possible covid infection 3 hours before my doctor's appointment, I could not get a test in time. I had to wait an additional month before my doctor could reschedule me.
- It took me 8 years to accrue enough sick and vacation time to take 4 months off for maternity leave. I depleted most of my vacation and sick time during my maternity leave. With a second pregnancy, I don't believe I'll be able to take that much time off.
- My employer offers 12 weeks of paid parental leave for the birth/adoption/fostering of a child (in addition, employees can take unpaid parental leave, provided that the total sum of leave doesn't exceed 6 months). I'm not sure if my employer offers extended paid leave for medical reasons - but they do offer sick days and allow employees to negotiate a leave of absence for personal reasons.
- Anticipating my mother getting older. Probably more like 10-15 years
- I dont know for sure but it's very possible I may have family things come up.
- My work provides FMLA. But I worry about covering my position.
- Parental leave is much shorter then maternal leave.
- I work as an RN and will have to completely empty my paid time off in order to take a maternity leave for 3 months and receive some pay. I still will not be able to get my full pay . I have been working in my current job for 1.8 years.

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- Both my husband and I now have jobs with good leave policies. But we know we're lucky. I'm speaking up because you shouldn't have to be "lucky" to deal with life hardships without getting absolutely buried.
- I have a large amount of sick leave saved and I can use that as FFSL if one of my parents needs care.
- If I do go back to work it will be part time because I am caring for my two children. I imagine, if our state had a robust paid leave plan that I might feel comfortable working more than part time.
- My wife is pregnant and when she gives birth I will take time off to help care for her our son we already have and our newborn. I am fortunate enough that the current company I work for will pay me for three weeks as well as I have saved my week of EPL I have accrued. Unfortunately if our experience is the same as our first son's birth which consisted of an extended NICU stay I will need to return to work because of needing to be paid.
- The check boxes don't adequately address the range of issues I prepare for -- a potential mental health problem for a young adult, a potential elder care need b/c of the death of a spouse/need for more support, a potential elder care need b/c of a fall or other unplanned event, a potential caregiving need b/c of a covid infection/long-covid, a potential caregiving need as a grandparent -- it is knowing that I am on deck for the emergencies of family members all around me that constrain me - it is impossible to plan. I will continue to be under-employed to ensure I can prioritize caregiving when needed, which frankly is a waste of my talents in the meantime.
- Though our work's leave policy is generous by American standards, three months is not enough bonding time for a child. Other leave is predicated on choosing to have and pay for short term disability insurance, which I am not in a position to afford.
- My employer (Bates College) only provides 6 weeks of parental leave. In contrast, my male partner gets 12 weeks of paid parental leave. I'll have to go back to work sooner than him, even though pregnancy and birth are major physical life events.
- I will use PTO
- I am concerned about the amount of time I will be able to spend away from work with baby #2. If I have to use my sick/vacation time in order to do so, I will likely spend less time away from work so I don't deplete my sick/vacation time.
- I was unexpectedly offered my current position. I had previously interviewed and was not offered the job so planned my spouse and I decided it was a good time to try to have our second baby so that I would have access to maternity leave from my employer at the time. About two months after that decision there was an unexpected opening for the job I had previously interviewed and was offered the job without having to re-interview. At the time I accepted I did not know I was pregnant but found out shortly thereafter. In my current position I am eligible for 1 month of paid maternity leave. I will then have to use all of my vacation and sick time which will give me another month of leave. Going back to work 8 weeks after giving birth is absolutely not what I want to do but I do not want to take any unpaid time as that will impact my health insurance and retirement. 8 weeks of leave is not nearly enough, especially knowing that with my first child I really was not physically or emotionally ready to return to work until around 6 months.
- My husband deploys. I would like to lessen my workload to care for our family in his absence but cannot
- We get 28 days for parental leave- at which time our baby will be too young for daycare and I won't have been cleared by my doctor yet.

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- I have an adult brother with several health issues who is disabled and it would not surprise me if in the next few years he requires care. As it is I already have to help him financially as his SSI is not adequate to cover even the bare minimum of living expenses, nonetheless when unexpected expenses arise.
- No
- I'm due to give birth to my second child this year. I am now self-employed as a licensed clinical social worker who runs a private practice. I carry a caseload of approximately 30 clients in the community and have been providing services since 2017. I receive zero benefits for family leave as a self-employed mental health professional; therefore, we have had to save money in order for me to take the time me and my baby need together. I will have to return to work before me and my baby are ready again and it will be a financial hardship on our family to not be offsetting our income during my leave.
- A major consideration of whether or not to have children and where to raise my family is paid medical and family leave. I don't plan to be an independent contractor forever, so this is something I will take into account when looking for my next full-time job.
- I may have to retire earlier than planned and start taking Social Security, or maybe find a more flexible part time job to augment SSI while caring for sick family member.
- I am fortunate in that I receive very generous earned time which has covered by needed time off for the last 8 years.
- I'm self-employed so if I need to go take care of my daughter who is chronically ill or if I become ill or have a medical procedure I just make less money and have to borrow if necessary.
- I feel like most people who cannot get paid do not take the time off from work they need. I know that is how I am. I know if I have a child this year I will only be able to take off 6 weeks and it will be a financially hard 6 weeks.

- Benefit is only three weeks of paid family leave
- I don't know what will happen, but I always prioritize my health and my family's health over productivity in the work force. I will not hesitate to use paid time, unpaid time, or stop working completely in order to heal or help others heal. But stress about money is counterproductive to healing for all of us.
- When I need time off I am able to take it, I have generous earned time off and FMLA, should I need it. My office has prioritized people taking time off when they need to address their health or the health needs of a family member, which is really nice, but should not be exceptional, I think all workplaces should be like this.
- I have Maine Earned Paid Leave, sick time and vacation time so I have 3 different leave policies available to use.
- I now have a job where I could take paid leave to care for myself or a family member, if ill. My parents are getting older and I anticipate in the coming years, I will be leaned on for support (driving to/from doctor's appointments, running errands, etc.) and that's if they stay reasonably healthy. Everyone should have the option to care for themselves or their family when they need to.
- My fiance will be the only one bringing in income and we aren't sure if he will be able to cover it. We also live paycheck to paycheck so we haven't been able to save.
- It will be less time that I need for a baby, so I should be able to use my sick time, which I have been banking up for years.

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- My partner and I are contemplating birthing, adopting, or fostering a child in the next 2-3 years. We both have a small amount of parental leave, and we acknowledge we are fortunate in that regard; many people are not.
- I would consider having more children, but it's too costly to not get paid for months and then pay for health insurance and childcare... For a state that needs to increase its birth rate to compensate for a decreasing population, Maine doesn't make it attractive to have children.
- I will give birth in March. I will receive 8 weeks of paid leave, and will take the remaining 4 unpaid.
- Paid parental leave would significantly improve my life and family bond.
- I don't intend on leaving my employer and unless a better policy is enacted either at the state or federal level by the time I grow my family again, I'll likely be in the same situation I was with my first birth.
- I am having a second child in 2022 and once again, will take 3 months off, but not all of it will be paid. My current job did not have a parental leave policy in place when I started, but has since added one.
- Recent changes at my job have allowed for an "unlimited PTO" policy which should pay me for any leave required.
- I will be leaving the workforce after childbirth because I won't be able to get paid time off. My husband and I have decided together that we can lose my income for a few years so that I can be a stay at home mom. If I were able to get a reasonable amount of paid time off, I might consider returning to work.
- My partner had bunion and then rotator cuff surgery. Both times I could take a few hours off to drive but she was left at home for 8 hours the next days when she really needed a pair of hands to help get ice, food and support from the immediate pain of surgery.
- I am not sure if the maternity leave at my job is paid or not. Also not sure how much they offer for time.
- I will be retired within two years, and I plan to work part time, which most likely will not offer health insurance. I will be anxiously waiting to turn 65 (4 more years) so I can access Medicare.
- I will be unable to work in recovery or if I have to care for a sick family member
- I am anticipating more time needed in years to come because my parents and in laws all live nearby and are all aging. I feel more comfortable taking time off as needed for myself or my immediate family, but not sure if I can justify taking time for caring for older family members, even though I should be able to.
- I'm retired
- I plan to have another child but will likely only get 3 months of leave if that. 3 months is not enough.
- Extremely Stressful taking care of elder parents and not having faith in the medical system and relying on others to ensure your parents are getting quality care
- Reflecting that I wouldn't receive paid leave for giving birth, I would be faced with the decision to leave my job for an extended period of time and could potentially put that position in jeopardy. I also couldn't afford daycare and would be forced to stay at home for a longer period of time.
- I love my job, but I don't know the full scope of the benefits offered and I am both worried I have not been here long enough to make use of these benefits, and worried that those benefits may not exist at all. The size of our organization means our insurance plan leaves MUCH to be desired, so I am afraid leave looks much the same. I pay into long term disability to cover any

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illnesses or injuries but I am not prepared to try to help my family. Sometimes I feel like I have to sacrifice my ability to assist them in order to keep my lights on and food on the table because the other people in my home cannot adequately make up for the money we would lose if I stopped working.

- Because I am self-employed I need to hire another person to do the work if I can not do it. The rate I would need to pay someone else would exceed the amount I could pay, so I will keep working and patch it together.
- After the birth of both of my children my husband had to use his vacation time to be home with me and our children. Making it so we were unable to have any other time off. No close by family either, making it more difficult. Especially having both of our children via c-section. Recovering and taking care of them mostly alone.
- I am 'retired' by default. (I wasn't even tired in the first place.) I plan for staying healthy so I can keep active and avoid medical bills.
- As a self-employed person, I'm not sure how much time I'll be able to take off for maternity leave. Worst case is 6 weeks, I would think, but I know that 12 weeks is so much better and would support my health and our family better.
- I am per diem now and will not receive a paid leave.
- When I do get pregnant, I will be unable to take time for appointments, difficult symptoms, or travel to see family. I'll have to save up every minute of earned time to hopefully be able to cover my maternity leave. My earned time bank will likely be empty when I return from leave and place my infant in daycare. Any sick days needed when my baby gets sick may or may not be covered by my earned time. On the other hand, my brother was injured overseas during deployment. I was unable to visit him or attend his Purple Heart ceremony because I have to save all my time for maternity leave.
- I'm unsure that I'll have much earned time for when my girlfriend gives birth. We are anticipating I'll go back to work within a week or so. It would be very helpful to have a few more weeks with the new baby and to help my girlfriend recover
- We can take up to 12 weeks and have employer-paid STD coverage that pays 60% of our wages while we're out on medical leave.
- I may need to take some time but I will take minimal time or work around needs of working and caring for my responsibilities.
- Your questions are poorly worded.
- Retired in November!
- I never take "enough" time off.
- My husband makes good money now. I can work less, but that doesn't mean I wouldn't like to work more. I like being more than mom.
- We are planning for our first child due next year. Infants need nurturing, mothers need healing, and parents need bonding that takes time. I plan to take as much time off as FMLA will allow. I plan to utilize disability insurance (which I pay a large amount for) for as long as I'm eligible after giving birth. I will take as much unpaid leave as we can afford to extend time with our newborn. We plan to see if my partner can take leave after I've utilized mine to extend the time the baby has with a primary caregiver before going to daycare and we return to work full time.
- My current job is one of the first I've ever had that offers sick time, but it's not unlimited. I guess I'd use my sick time up and see what happens after that.

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- I retired in 2020, but I had expected to work part-time or volunteer. The pandemic and my health issues have made this impossible.
- I will not take more than 12 weeks of maternity leave or my employer will stop paying their share of my health insurance
- I'll take the maximum amount of paid time off for maternity leave but know that 3 months is not enough in caring for a newborn.
- I have enough money saved from my high paying job to finance a year at home with our baby, assuming I am able to carry a pregnancy to term. I've worked really hard to save this money because I know I can't rely on any benefits from employment to stay home for as long as I truly want, which is the length of time my baby is breastfeeding, at least. Ideally I'd stay home unless my child enters pre-k, but we will not be able to afford such an extended absence from the work force. I can stay home for 1-2 years with my current savings.
- I've been a per diem worker for over a decade. Not having any paid time off means I've often had to work when ill. OR, I've missed work and had financial difficulties because of the lack of pay.
- My current company does not have a maternity leave benefit as part of their package. We have access to a paid benefit for FMLA
- I don't anticipate expected needs, just emergency ones with me or my parents, but I do know my current job is flexible in where I work and I have sick time saved up. My work also just industries instituted paid leave that includes caring for a sick relative.
- I work for a school. Luckily we have a pretty generous paid sick day policy and family sick policy.
- The leave that my current employer enacted a mere month ago for parental leave only covers 1/3 of the minimal 12 weeks allotted for parental leave. It's SOMETHING, better than the first time I had a child, but it's still not enough! I'll have to save up and use vacation time to get paid and partially go unpaid. A large factor as to WHEN in my life I decided to have children, is financially driven, which is sad as I'm otherwise healthy but now placed in a high risk obstetric category being advanced maternal age. Again, the system is broken.
- I don't think I have more to share
- I help care for my dad. I've found a part time job that is super flexible, but I won't be able to give my dad or my job the attention that I really want to
- My mother has Parkinson's and will need more support in the coming years.
- I have elderly parents (one of which has a heart condition) out of state who take care of my sister and her baby. If anything happens to them I will have to go deal with it and take the time off. I'm lucky to have a partner who works hard and can help allow me to do those things but not as long as we would like and we would both like to be able to help together but that's impossible as at least one of us needs to be making money.
- My job offers very limited paid parental leave, so I will probably have to go back to work before I am ready to do so, and I will likely try to work right up until giving birth. If I experience medical issues or complications, I made end up needing to take unpaid leave.

- I am employed in Massachusetts so am able to take advantage of the FML act that is available to Mass employees. I will receive 3 months of paid leave through my employer and an additional 3 months through the state.

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- My mother is likely to need more help as her MS is getting worse and my family leave, even unpaid does not cover parents. I will likely not be able to care for her because I need to get paid, and overtime is often mandatory. I am going to school to be an engineer in hope that I can find a better job so that I can hire someone else to care for her with the added income.
- My partner intends to have a child, but is trans and has had too surgery. I want to bond with and breastfeed this baby, but I don't know if I will be able to with work.
- I've known many workers, who while working full-time, still are the stressed-out primary providers of care to loved ones.
- I have aging parents and parents-in-law
- I work on a contract basis like many so I can take time away from work but time is money.
- I have issues with my shoulder, and may have to have surgery.
- I've been with my employer 10+ years, so I am eligible for 100% pay for the first 13 weeks of leave. Moreover, half my team is in Canada ... so, culturally, there's no stigma attached to taking Leave.
- I want to be able to plan having another child, I have my own medical care and surgeries that I've been putting off that I need to take care of and I need to be more available to take care of my mom. I also need to be able to have the time to take care of mental health.
- I will partially be paid but not enough to cover my normal wages, some time will be unpaid
- I actually don't know if those situations will occur as I am done having kids, both my parents have passed and I don't anticipate having surgery oh getting injured, but I would be apt to take PTO first rather than FMLA because of the hoops it takes to access it. But the constant daycare closures or caring for sick kids because we can't send them to daycare puts a huge strain on families. As our daycare has refused to mask, there have been so many closures since the mask mandate ended that we are pulling our youngest out of care to try and find something that is safe and reliable.
- I Amin my elder years and may need surgery.
- My adult son has a serious mental illness. This causes lots of work conflict
- I know that I'd want to stay home as long as possible and the cost of childcare would take most of my salary if I went back to work.
- I'm fortunate to be a homemaker and able to see to our kids' and family needs while my husband is well paid.
- I'll likely take 12 weeks unpaid.
- Caring for elderly mom. I'm moving my business to asynchronous work in order to have more freedom.
- I have no immediate plans to have more children or need additional FMLA. My income for the past year has been significantly reduced because I took about 3 months of unpaid FMLA for bonding time with my child
- Again, I have saved up some good saved sick leave so am hopeful I would not use up those days. But if I had to or worked in a situation that did not have this, what would I do?
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- Planning on pregnancy. The full 12 weeks is important to me to spend that time with my baby and frankly I don't consider it long enough for maternity leave considering what other countries do. I will take what I need to do unpaid but finances will be tight.

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- Who knows what will happen. I'm praying for a miracle but my circumstances don't really allow for it to be easy. More than likely I will have to neglect my physical health to survive. If the medical community continues at this rate, I will continue to be tortured by my injury, and not be able to receive any help I need. While my ex and his lawyer stall their jury trial for the assault, hoping they can gain sympathy so he can walk free. I will suffer, attempting to heal with my spirituality and positivity. Maybe a miracle would happen. I don't trust the medical community at all.
- I'll have to wait for surgery until I've accumulated enough paid time off to cover being out.
- I've recently started working for a company based out of California that pays 100% of family leave.
- There really isn't a plan to cover me. I work for a small business, FMLA does not apply to me. They will try to give me time unofficially and pay me, but there is a minimum of work that will still need to be done by me weekly (payroll, invoices etc)

I just don't have the option to take any actual leave.

- Have utilized investing in stocks that pay dividends on my Robinhood account to pay me for maternity leave this time. Also, my partner has a better job.
- I will be looking for a better job that might be able to better support me so I can fulfill my goal to become a parent
- I will take PTO that I have earned, if I run out of PTO will take unpaid time that is needed.
- See previous.
- I may have to have back surgery in the next few years due to Degenerative Disc Disease. I am working remotely now so when I'm sick, I can usually work through it, being comfortable at home and not making a 50 minute commute (one way). If we need to return to work by then, I will need to take the time off and hopefully I will be able to bank enough before that in order to get paid.
- I cannot predict illness, but I have elderly family members who will I almost certainly need to provide care for in the coming few years.
- I chose between the two options above because I am not sure what the circumstances will be. My partner and I have talked about how we would be able to afford our bills if I need to go out on FMLA and get partially paid or not paid at all.
- I recently started a new job, so if I want to have a baby in the next couple of years I will have very little paid time off accrued. I will likely be able to take off only 20-30 days before needing to return to work.
- This year I will have to have 5 surgeries. I will not have access to any paid medical leave. I anticipate using a majority of my savings in order to keep up with rent and bills while I am unable to work. Should anything go wrong (complications, etc), it would be disastrous for me. This causes a large amount of anxiety, more than my medical issues do.
- I am currently pregnant and expect to take a maternity leave this summer. I'm thankful I can take 3 months for parental leave but it will be very difficult to do so without my full paycheck.

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- We are debating having more children or not completely depending on financial situations.
- At 68 I expect to remain somewhat healthy and know that I or my partner may experience an injury or illness at any time.
- My employer has an unlimited Paid Time Off policy. This is what every employer should do for full time employees. Regardless of whether employees are making minimum wage or \$100K+. When CEO make 10-100 times their employees the free market concept has stopped working.
- A key piece of my own safety net is that both my husband and I have always worked for organizations that provided paid family and medical leave. I can't imagine having to navigate life without that.
- When there's no safety net, people don't tend to reach out and extend themselves beyond a certain point. My desire to become a foster parent is huge, taking the necessary time away from work will definitely influence this process.
- Paid family leave just makes sense. When you have a life event such as giving birth or needing to recover from surgery or illness, you shouldn't have to worry about your livelihood. As a society we should be taking care of each other.
- My husband and I would really like to start a family but my current employer only covers four weeks leave at 60% salary. They only allow a total of 12 weeks parental leave and besides those four weeks allow employees to use accrued PTO, otherwise leave is unpaid. The fact that I have a far better situation than most makes me deeply sad.
- I have some leave accrued, so in the event of an emergency or illness I will be able to take time off work without losing pay.
- Again, 12 weeks is not nearly long enough postpartum, especially when you look at leave in other developed nations.
- I have a lot of paid sick time accrued from longevity with my company.
- My husband makes most of the money for the family and we are very frugal.
- I can work from home so won't need to take much time off
- Because I work for myself now I can let business ebb and flow around the needs of my family.
- I'm 25 and my father and mother are both older seniors. It would not be surprising if I have to help them in the future. I also have a surgery that I might be getting. It is elective so if I can't find a way to have income during recovery, I won't do it.
- It's difficult to check if I won't need time away from work because I'm not working. I have children. I work more than full-time. If I need to tend to another family member - or prioritize one of my children, I need to hire child care.
- My mom is in her 70s, and I assume she will need care and support at some point soon. I have a week of paid sick/family leave time, and imagine I will run out of that quickly between my needs and hers.
- I imagine my aging parents will need care at some point but will want to live as independently as they can.

Now that I work part time and job share for one of my 2 jobs, I think I could finagle something temporarily at least.

- I have trouble taking time off in the fear of retaliation and losing my job.

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- My sister has terminal brain cancer. I don't know when, and I pray every day that it's not for decades, but it is likely that within the next few years her condition will deteriorate and she will die. I want to be with her as much as possible and have spoken with my HR person about my options. I would be able to use a little paid time off, but it would be extremely limited, and I would not be surprised if I take some time away from work that is unpaid.
- My mother is struggling with memory issues and I am her primary caregiver as my siblings live away from here. I will need to take more and more time to make sure that she is ok. She/we cannot afford long term care and we want her aging at home.
- When I give birth in February, my firm offers 8 weeks off, unpaid. We sold a house last year and set aside enough to cover what I would have earned during that time period, so we are lucky enough to have that savings. However, it's hard to imagine going back to work at 8 weeks postpartum. I remember the feeling from my previous childbirth experience and I know that I wasn't really ready to go back until more like 4 or 6 months postpartum. I'm really dreading it but it was hard enough to find a part time position in my field (legal) so I'll just have to deal with it.
- My employer has just adopted a 12 week paid family and medical leave policy
- Hernia surgery coming up only part of it will be covered by sick leave. Aging parents may need more care at any moment.
- I don't plan to return to work until my baby is old enough to enter public school. It is too difficult to be employed because if he gets sick, I am not allowed to stay home and care for him. Or if I continue to have my own health issues, I won't be able to return to work. Daycares right now are too difficult to find good, trustworthy teachers to care for my son. It's also too expensive. By working, I make just enough to send him. I might as well stay home and care for him myself and enjoy the time with my own son while he's little.
- i have no foreseen upcoming leaves
- I'm pregnant right now and it is frustrating to calculate my sick days to see how much paid time I can off to take care of my infant. I have no family around and won't be able to get into a child care facility for 3 months due to finances and difficulty finding enrollment since many are full.
- I am retired.
- My work offers generous paid family leave, but it's a hardship for the employer.
- I'm very judicious in my use of paid time off so I have it available to me if I need it for some reason. I'm in a job that pays less than I could likely make in another position given my qualifications but I accept less in wages for the benefits like paid time off,
- Return to work might have less to do with getting paid (directly) and more to do with pressure to return
- My husband and I would like to expand our family, but we're caught trying to manage this important life event with planning around our jobs. Because there is no paid leave, we have to try to time our next child with when our work is most flexible. I will have to go back sooner so we can afford to have the baby at all, but then of course daycare costs \$1,000 per month (per child). I really want to keep working but I'm not sure how the math is going to work out.

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- The middle class subsidizes the rich. Of course, I am not really middle class. My salary would have been \$36,000. As a single person, that cannot be lived on. When my parents' house sells, I plan to buy a condo and get a roommate.
- I do not currently anticipate any life events, but if any occur, they will require me to take time away from work, but I'll have to keep that as minimal as possible so that I can continue to get paid.
- I would like to take a 12 week maternity leave but I don't believe I'll be able to do that financially unfortunately.
- It is hard because no one knows what the future holds and there is no security from work or from the government about how you will make ends meet if something happens - whether it be a joyful thing like a new baby or a scary thing like an ill family member.
- I plan to likely stay home and only my partner would work because he earns more, and I have no PTO at either job and we would not be able to afford daycare
- My company offers 6 weeks paid leave - but that's not enough for me so I'll go back to work at 6-8 weeks postpartum instead of later (which is better for me and baby), but with bills to pay it's not possible.
- I became a stay at home mom in large part because I wasn't qualified for any jobs that give substantial parental leave and was not ready to leave my babies at such a young age. I was fortunate to even have a choice but it meant making very tough financial choices in the early days and has had a big long-term impact on my mental and physical health.
- I would probably end up using my vacation time. I always try to keep a week available in case something happens.
- My employer now has what is called "responsible PTO," which provides a fair amount of flexibility as needed.
- I hope to become pregnant and take some time off.
- I have two pretty big medical concerns that I have been putting off because I don't know if I'll be able to take enough time off for recovery.
- I would probably try to work from home and care for this person simultaneously.
- My employer already offer 16 weeks full pay leave. I just want others to be able to take care of their kids too.

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18. Thinking about your past experience and anticipated future experience with life events that require you to care for yourself or others, how much time off from work did you need or would you need over the course of a 12-month period? (535 responses)

- 6-8 weeks
- 20 weeks for my children
- 24wks
- 12 weeks
- 12 weeks at a minimum
- 9 months would have been helpful.
- TBD: 1 week to 14 weeks
- 16 weeks
- When having a child, 6 months would be much more beneficial for my child and myself
- A couple of weeks would be wonderful--it would be nice if this didn't have to come out of my vacation time.
- 3 - 5 months
- between 1 week and a month and a half depending on circumstances
- A minimum of 6 months fully paid off for the birth/adoption of a child for both parents is critical. I'd also suggest the option of extended to one full year with partial pay options and job security.
- 1 - 2 days a month, but not always full days -- sometimes just an hour or three
- 6 weeks paid would be great, but 12 weeks better_ 6 months would be ideal bc that's how long babies should be exclusively breastfed.
- on average, a week
- 4.5 months.
- 1 day
- 3-4 months
- well over 60 hours
- I have needed up to 3 months, but i think 5 days is more average in most years to account for maintenance Dr visits and unexpected occurrence.
- 3 weeks
- 6 months
- 2 to 3 weeks
- 12-16 Weeks
- 9 months paid time for childbirth- minimum. Breastfeeding exclusively is recommended for the first six months, so going back to work at any time before that jeopardizes infant health.
- Six months
- 15 days
- 12 weeks at least if I adopt a child
- 8 weeks would allow me to recover from having a child. However if I were to run into the same events that still would not be enough.
- At least 12 weeks for birth of child/pregnancy
- 1 to 2
- It would depend if a family member has COVID. I also have aging parents.
- I think 12 weeks that can be used as you chose within one calendar year is a helpful benefit that she's people and their loved ones up to manage a major life change.
- 6 months

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- If you are asking about how much paid leave is needed when the emergency situation arrives (which is not anticipated to be yearly), I would say 4-6 months.
- approx. 21 days
- 6 months of maternity leave . 3 months should be paid for by employer
- 2 months or more
- Two weeks in normal years. More for something catastrophic.
- 3 weeks
- 2 months
- 4-5 months
- 4 months
- 3+ weeks
- Four months
- I ended up quitting my job as my family member was so sick. I did not work for two years, and had I not had property to sell for enough to keep my daughter and I going at under poverty levels, and without the help of generous Community members we would not have made it.
- For the birth of a child%0A6 months minimum.
- I think three months was the minimum that felt doable for both times in my life - caring for my dying mother and caring for my new baby.
- 20 - 25 weeks
- Six weeks
- Between 4 to 6
- 4 months
- 4-6 months
- 2-3 weeks minimum
- To recover from birth and bond with a new child, 4-6 months. For more typical childcare/sick requirements, 2-3 weeks, assuming a flexible employer and the option to work from home.
- Depends on the situation. Most things have been a week, maybe two. When both my parents had strokes I could%0Ave used a month or two
- The unplannable part is what's so hard.
- 3-4 weeks
- 3 or 4 weeks intermittantly
- 6 months
- For birth? 6 months. For illness - it depends and for grief- 2-3 weeks minimum for a close family member.
- 3 months minimum
- This would totally depend on many factors - hard to estimate.
- 10 days
- Not sure. I think 12 weeks would be a good number for a lot of folks.
- 12 weeks
- Unsure
- Maternity leave should be 6 months minimum.
- A few weeks, but that may change depending on the situation
- With the birth of a child four months was necessary, more time would be very beneficial.

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- 6 months
- Variable, hard to say
- Realistically, about a month. Easily.
- 1-2 weeks
- 3 months
- It is difficult to estimate.
- 3 months
- A few weeks
- 4 weeks
- 2 weeks
- Between a week and 12 weeks
- 16-20
- 3-6 weeks minimum
- Many years, no time off. Several years, needed to take 2-15 mths off.
- 1-2 weeks
- Four weeks
- 400 hours
- Two weeks
- 4 yo 6 weeks depending on circumstances
- I needed at least 2 weeks
- Two or three weeks
- maybe a month?
- 3 weeks
- 6 months
- 3 months minimum, 6 months ideal
- 60 hrs
- It depends on the type of event. But at minimum 4 weeks for any kind of serious life event, and in many instances more time is needed, up to a full year
- The most time off I have taken, by far, is with my c-section and recovery- I was out for about 10 weeks. Last year I took a week off for my partners surgery and 2 weeks when I had a surgical procedure. Other than pregnancy and recovery I don't anticipate significant stretches of time off- but most of those things are hard to plan for.
- 1 week
- 3 to 2 weeks depending on event
- 2-4 weeks
- At least 3 months for maternity leave. I was dealing not only with a baby but recovery from birth injuries.
- 5 days
- 2-4 weeks
- 6 months
- 4-6 months
- 3 months at the minimum
- I needed several months off of work to bond with my newborn child.
- 8 days

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- 14 days
- Maybe 5 days that aren't holidays.
- 1-2 months for major life events like medical emergencies, child birth, and family member caregiving.
- Re. my past injury, I would have needed 3 months leave.
- At least 6 months would've been really helpful after having twins.
- 3 weeks
- For my past experience (traumatic birth with medical needs for my baby), I needed at LEAST 3 months (12 weeks) to have addressed that physical and psychological trauma. For my current intentions of adopting from foster care, I do not need any additional time, but my situation is pretty straightforward. An option to have days to take would be nice in my case, and NECESSARY in others' cases.
- 2-4 months for a child birth minimum
- 12-24 weeks.
- I think paid family leave should be 12 weeks paid.
- A few days each week, not counting my days off
- Varies widely
- Unsure of the answer to that question, but I think consulting research about what is most beneficial for early childhood development and birthing-person's health and bonding with said child should be taken into account to potentially increase the amount of time we allocate for such a policy.
- 3 months
- 14 days
- 6 Months
- 4 weeks
- 30 days
- Six months should be standard for the birth of a child, for each parent.
- 6 weeks
- 3 months at a minimum; 6 months would be ideal.
- 12 months
- 8 weeks
- 6 months
- 8-12 weeks
- I don't know.
- 3 days
- I personally believe a minimum of 4 months postpartum paid time off should be the standard.
- Maybe a week total
- At least 6-8 weeks if not more.
- 1 month
- 2-3 months
- For me, if I was still employed, I would initially have needed more than a month to deal with everything and would have needed to hire a caregiver.
- 3 Months

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- I took 4 months off from teaching due to breast cancer. I used my sick days that I accumulated so I was paid throughout the ordeal.
- 8 to 12 weeks
- 1-2 weeks, maybe?
- At least 60 days
- When I was working, child care would have been my greatest need.
- 2-3 months
- For physical injury, the time of healing, as well as rehabilitation. Mental illnesses are more difficult to judge how much time you'll need.
- Not sure
- A few weeks per year
- Not every year but when it happens a couple of months
- 5 weeks
- 6 months
- 2-3 months - likely dropping to about the equivalent of 75 percent time
- 3 months
- 3 weeks
- I would have taken 6 months of maternity leave if I had been able to
- 12-16 weeks
- At least four months
- 4-6 weeks
- 6 months
- 12-16 weeks
- 2 to 4 months
- 2-3 months
- Longer than FMLA allowed for.
- 3 months paid leave for the birth of a child and then more time (preferably up to 6 months, the remaining 3 unpaid) to stay home and bond with the baby. Pumping breastmilk is a big stressor and the more time at home with the baby, the more likely breastfeeding past the 6 month mark will be for breastfeeding parents.
- 24 days
- 3 weeks
- Having up to 9 months would be very important for me based on my past experience
- 2-3 weeks on up to 12-15 weeks for a sick parent
- 6 weeks
- I feel I am an unusual case, especially given I suffered two freak accidents in my past position. At present I would like a month or two to help my sick family member but I don't know.
- 3 months
- Depends. 1-2 weeks would generally be fine, except for recovery from childbirth which I think requires at least 6-12 months.
- 30 days
- In the future, if lucky enough to conceive a child again or if I were to need another surgery or have another pregnancy loss it would be very beneficial for my husband to be able to take time off of work paid to provide for our family. Having another baby would definitely need a month at least and 3 months at most.

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- Minimum 10 weeks post childbirth
- Judging from my mother and mother-in-law's aging/death, I see three months would be most helpful. If that total number of days (90 days) could be used over six months, that flexibility would be really helpful.
- 3-4 months
- 5 weeks
- I took a 10 week mental health leave of absence from my job in 2020 and then 12 weeks after giving birth to my daughter in 2020. I feel like I need a break right now (I work in healthcare and burnout is a huge problem right now), but I know I'm ineligible for any time off, paid or unpaid, so I quit my job instead.
- 4-5 months
- 12 months ideally
- I would love to have 6 months off with my infants.
- In an ideal situation, I would be able to take 6-12+ months with my newborn baby. Leave for other illness, family illness/injury could probably be covered with 4 weeks depending on the situation
- 13 weeks
- 2-6 months, depending on circumstances. It would be great to have a couple months with the baby at least. And then more time for unexpected illnesses.
- 1 week
- Needed 8 weeks, could need 12 in the future.
- Parents should be allowed a year of paid time off after the birth of a child
- I'm giving birth, and studies have shown that the longer babies are home with their parents, the better their developmental outcomes so- at least 6 months!
- It would depend on the situation. My husband has numerous health issues and I probably could not work. After his last several hospitalizations I needed to be home 24/7 to care for him for several months.
- 3-6 weeks
- 2 -3 months
- In total including vacation and holidays is three weeks. Use it or lose it.
- 1-2 months birth or death in family
- 2 months
- At least 12 weeks. I also had to use all of my vacation time during my parental bonding leave. Meaning that when I went back to work I had no bank for sick time, during a pandemic. So if myself or anyone in my household was sick with Covid or needing to quarantine I had no remaining paid time off to take.
- 8 weeks
- 6 months
- 12 Weeks
- I don't expect to give birth yearly, but I do expect I may need to take 3-5 weeks off for medical needs. Thinking mental health days or of my husband or daughter are sick
- 4-6 months
- 12-24 weeks
- 6 months

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- I think you should get to be with your babies for 12 months and not stress about getting back to work.
- I would like at least 6 months paid leave after giving birth.
- 4-8 weeks
- 1 full year off is preferred
- 2-3 months
- As far as maternity leave was concerned, a minimum of 12 weeks. However, I felt more myself and comfortable to leave my baby between 6-9 months.
- 6 months at least
- Range of time from 1 month to 12 month. I wish I had been able to take at least a month off in caring for my parents. Maternity/paternity leave should be a full year.
- Surgery (unilateral oophorectomy) required two weeks recovery time.
- It depends on the life event, but 3 months at least.
- 4-6 weeks
- Maybe a month over that time.
- 12 weeks
- 12 weeks post partem
- 3-6 months
- 3-6 months
- Having access to 12-16 weeks of paid leave in a year is really important. That could be post-birth time for someone or enough time to spread out over a year to care for a sick relative and get them in a safer place.
- 12 weeks when I gave birth though I pushed and went back part time to make the leave stretch out longer
- 3-6 months
- Postpartum m, for each child(have2) really needed 6-12 months
- I took 12 wks paid for all 3 births.
- At least a few months
- I would have loved to take a full 4 months after delivery..
- Total of about 2 weeks
- 12-15 weeks
- Usually at least 1-2 weeks. Sometimes that family member wasn't close by and I had to travel which adds time.
- Birth years. We should have at least 24 months paid leave which I know sounds like a lot, but I we know the first years of life are so formidable.
- 4 months
- For birth, I believe at a minimum if 6months is needed. In other life events, it's variable.
- 3 months
- 2 weeks
- 4 months
- I generally try to take fridays and Monday's off if I have to deal with stuff out of state. Probably adds up to a few weeks out of the year.
- It took me a full 6 months to deal with everything postpartum, compounded by the fact that we couldn't find daycare space for an infant
- 16 weeks

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- For birth, no less than 3-4 months
- 20 weeks
- One month
- For me personally I think about three weeks of paid leave time total. But if someone is giving birth or becoming a parent they should have a minimum of 12 weeks for recovery.
- 12 weeks
- 2 to 4 weeks
- 4 - 6 months
- 16wks
- I recently took 2 weeks off to support my family and grandfather in his last weeks of life. This was incredibly important for me and for my family to be able to do that. I am lucky to not have suffered the loss of work or wages as a result. Having a baby- I would have loved 5-6 months. 3 months is TOO SOON.
- For my miscarriage I took 3 days of sick time. I was still struggling with symptoms of the miscarriage while at work which was physically challenging as well as emotionally exhausting. I was completely recovered after two weeks which would likely have been less if I hadn't had to work. I believe that the 6 months I will be afforded for maternity leave will be adequate.
- 3 months
- 30 days
- Probably 3 months.
- 12-16 weeks
- 3-4 months
- 6 weeks
- 6 months to care for an infant
- 3 months for leave after a birth experience
- 3months
- 6 weeks
- 2 weeks
- At the very least, a week, to cover medical leave. However depending on the job, I feel at another week should be given to account for family visitation and mental health checkups.
- at almost 1 year postpartum i honestly think new moms deserve at least 3 months paid leave if not more.
- Maternity leave should be at least 12 weeks without using sick time.
- 6-12 months
- I got covid in March of 2020. I have been extremely ill with long-covid since then. I was self-employed and have not been able to return to work. I am to ill to work or care for my children.
- 6 months for having a baby
- 6-12 weeks
- 12 weeks
- I had a baby November 2020 and my mom who lives alone had emergency brain surgery in January 2021. I had maxed out my time off so I wasn't able to take more to care for her. It was very stressful. I'm an all star employee who never had to take leave before. My life just happened to be crazy all at once.
- I think no less than 12 weeks is acceptable for paid leave after having a baby. I think fathers need time to be home and help their partners as well.

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- My family and I rarely take time off from work. The aforementioned illness was both surprising and catastrophic.
- It really varies. Birth needs much longer than surgery.
- depending on the issue, but months for giving birth, or 4 weeks to recover from surgery
- 4 months
- Hard to say, but at least 8 weeks for surgery. If a family member gets ill, I don't know. My family member has no one to take care of her.
- Depends on the nature of the event. I am a year away from retirement.
- From 2014-2019 I took a 6-month Leave, a 1-month Leave, and a 1-week Leave.
- 8-12 weeks for parental leave
- At least 4 weeks per year
- 50 to 60 days
- 2 months
- Several months
- Minimum 3 months, 6 months would be ideal.
- 1 week- 3 months
- For maternity leave: 12 weeks. For other life events, it just depends.
- 4- 12 weeks
- 3+ months
- To truly recover from giving birth and navigating parenthood, I believe a minimum of 6 months is necessary. The baby is still developing their immune system during that time, and is wholly dependent on their parents for food and sleep and other basic needs.
- 6 weeks for mental health and 3 months for birth
- 4 weeks
- 12 weeks in a 12 month time period like MA, NY and CT
- Up to 6 weeks
- At least 6-12 weeks
- 12-16 weeks
- 20-26 weeks
- 6 months
- 12 weeks
- 5-10 days
- Paid family medical leave would allow the work force to avoid serious disruption and keep the number of people on welfare down
- A few weeks
- 45
- 1 month
- It would've been wonderful to Take more than 12 weeks off, paid, for my micropreemie.
- In other countries paid leave for nursing parent is given for 3 months or More and for the second parent for at least a month or more- paid leave
- 4 weeks
- 6-8 weeks
- 3-6 months ideally
- 6 months

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- 6 months for maternity leave
- 4 weeks
- Six months
- 3 weeks spread over the year
- 3 months for the birth of my children. Otherwise, somewhere between 1-4 weeks
- 2 months
- 4 months maternity leave. Ideally being able to use it in whatever way works for our family (go back 3 days/week for a bit)
- 4 months min
- It would be great to have six months of paid parental leave.
- 8 weeks
- 16 weeks
- A few weeks
- One week
- 4-8 weeks
- 12 weeks
- I only get 12 weeks covered. 16 weeks would be a lot more reasonable for newborn bonding.
- 6 months
- 3 months
- I needed about 6 months off work and have set my life up with very few bills so this was possible
- 3 months as well as an accumulation of 4 weeks
- 2-6 weeks depending on my son's recovery and my own unreliable health
- 12 weeks
- 6 months
- One year is the MINIMUM we should get for the birth of a child.
- 4-6 months postpartum, ideally 1 year.
- 12 weeks
- If I needed spine surgery, over a year? I'm unsure.
- A month maybe more
- Hopefully not any but you never know.
- I am a retired teacher but I now work in the summer for NMW on a gap.
- I had to have surgery and had to have 4 weeks off. I will need to have surgery and am not sure how much time it will take to recover.
- 5-10 days /year
- 1-2 weeks
- This should not be limited. It's variable and can't be quantified. You can't estimate the unexpected.
- Most years none up to 3 months in a couple of years
- Varies. It would be nice to have guaranteed part for at least the 12 week FMLA.
- The whole 12 months
- At least 6-8 months
- 2 months at most
- 2 weeks to 6 months+

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- 5mo
- 1-2 months
- 12 weeks minimum
- This question is waaaaay too vague.
- I think matching the 12 weeks FMLA covers is a good amount.
- 3-4 months for a new baby.
- Adequate maternity leave would be at least 6 months paid.
- 3 months
- 3 months-6 months
- 9 months for a new baby
- I just don't think going back to work full time is. The first year of life is feasible.
- For child birth, six months. Otherwise, two to six weeks.
- 5 days
- 6-months minimum, all research points to this for a birth.
- I anticipate two weeks off, maybe more.
- I could see needing 4 to 6 weeks for a surgery; not sure how long for a family member.
- Birth of a child - option of 6 months paid leave
- Childbirth/Adoption- 9-12 month minimum. Elder care, illness, or surgery- 6-9 months minimum.
- 2 - 3 months
- 80hrs to 120hrs
- 2 weeks
- 4-8 weeks, but perhaps more with time off to take my spouse to dr appointments
- 0 as we plan to have a child in 2023.
- I would like for there to be paid parental leave of at least 3 months.
- For the birth of a child, three to six months. Caring for an elderly parent, need flexibility and perhaps several days off a month.
- 10-12 weeks
- 3 weeks- 2 months
- For taking care of family member, 1 week. For giving birth, 3 months plus time for doctor appointments.
- 3-6 month
- 6 weeks
- being able to spend time with my parents at the end of their lives made a huge difference in my ability to grieve the loss.
- 1-2 weeks at most at full pay and then some sort of less than full pay for longer leave
- 21-26 weeks
- 0-14 days
- About a 12 days for being extremely sick with what I think was COVID-19, and then another 4-5 days interspersed at other times
- Don't know
- 4-6 months at minimum
- No more than 1-2 weeks most years. For two really serious episodes in my life, I would have needed 1-2 months.

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- Approximately three months
- 3-6 months
- Rotator Cuff surgery: 6 weeks
- 6 months for childbirth is recommended
- I find that at least one day per month (12 per year) is what's needed to comfortably have enough paid leave.
- 20- 30 days
- 3 weeks
- I used about half of my sick days in the doe each year (about 5) on average, some years I used my entire car (10 days per year)
- 1 month
- 1-2 months
- 6 weeks
- 1-2 weeks
- 6-9 months
- Unknown
- After having a baby being home with them is of the utmost importance. I can't say how long paid maternity leave should be, but 2 weeks is a joke. It takes a community to raise a child. Sweden has a 5 year paid maternity leave and almost 0 crime rate. Ripping children away from their parents never proves beneficial.
- 4 months
- At first,not much. I was young and healthy. Now I average 2 days/no.
- It depends!
- Ideally, 4-6 months
- Don't know
- At first,not much. I was young and healthy. Now I average 2 days/no.
- Not sure, 12 weeks with a pregnancy
- 3 days
- Honestly I won't really know until it happens.
- Don't know
- 6-8 weeks
- 1-4 weeks depending on what happens with the family member
- Hard to say. Not usual events
- It averages out to just a couple days a year, when our children were born I took more time then but I saved my sick time for that and would have used vacation time if necessary
- 12 weeks
- Knowing ahead of time I had a few weeks available as a safety net would feel comfortable, whether I ended up using it or not.
- 0 - I would need several weeks hopefully a few times over my working career.
- 6 weeks
- 2-4 weeks
- 6 months
- Both my father and mother have passed away. I live with my older brother who is in generally in healthy condition. He would probably be the only person that might need me to take care of

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him. I do not know if companies would approve that because he is a sibling not a parent or grandparent.

- For a birth 8-10 weeks, but I have flexibility in my schedule that doesn't require 40 clocked hours & 8-10 hours straight on the job.
- about a week once or twice per year
- Mothers need to be able to take at least 3 months off after giving birth. I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't been able to do that.
- More than the four weeks I had. I was teaching at the time and felt penalized for having a child outside of summer break.
- 6-12 weeks
- I don't know
- 4 weeks is reasonable for any person. That's less than 10 percent of our lives that we are asking for back from being a cog.
- 16 weeks
- A few weeks
- I think it takes 3 days to recover for most short term illnesses. Surgeries - it depends on the procedure. But I think a standard week (5 days) is reasonable.
- It depends on the experience; a year of paid leave with the birth of my infant would be better for everyone, certainly given the cost of child care, and the duration of an illness or recovery from injury varies.
- Two - four weeks
- Having those two months off to help my grandma would have been incredibly helpful for everyone in my family. Or even if each family member could take 4 weeks each that would have been amazing. For surgery I wished I could have taken at least 2 weeks.
- no idea, probably 3 months?
- 4-6 weeks
- 4 weeks
- 3 Months
- 3 months
- 1-2 weeks paid medical leave on average would be nice
- I have been lucky enough to not need time off to address a life event like those mentioned above. I feel confident that my employer would do what they can to give me the time off needed
- I had 6 weeks off completely and a reduced schedule for another 4 weeks
- During my first pregnancy, I was offered ten weeks paid leave at my job, before deciding to leave because a. That's not enough, and b. Child care would've been too expensive for my salary. New mothers need a MINIMUM of 3-4 months off to establish breastfeeding, a sleep schedule for their baby, bonding, and of course, to heal their bodies from the permanent changes pregnancy and childbirth cause.
- In terms of care for self and others, I'd say at least 3 weeks of paid vacation time (not including holidays). The American model of time off is obscenely lacking - if I could, I'd make it so that 6 - 8 weeks PTO was the minimum given.
- two weeks
- 8 weeks

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- I am an only adult child with two elderly parents and an elderly grandmother all out of state all requiring care and I don't even know where to start dealing with it
- Unknown
- 3 months
- No idea. I haven't needed this in the past, but my parents are getting older and both have medical problems now. Hard to predict.
- Several months
- depends so much on the year. btw 2 weeks and 16?
- 4 weeks
- 3-6 months
- Many years I've only needed days here and there when children have colds and stomach bugs - perhaps 1-2 weeks, spread out in smaller bits. With maternity leaves, I wanted approximately 20 weeks. With the pandemic, more time for family leave is also needed. I would like to have the option of 4-6 weeks, but would only use as much of that as I needed.
- 12 Weeks and 6 weeks
- 4-6 weeks at least
- For childbirth: at minimum 3 months. For childcare, at minimum 2 days per month or 24 days per year.
- 0
- Pre covid paid time included sickness related to symptoms now we need to use pto time for all. Family Medical Leave didn't cover my time for assisting foster children.
- 8-12 weeks
- 12 weeks
- One month
- Four weeks minimum
- If it's covid related, we need ten days to quarantine every time they're directly exposed. How many times per month does/can that happen? From January to May of 2021, it happened 4 times and I was not paid for the time off. When my son caught rsv from his daycare, he was out for 2 weeks and I had to stay home unpaid. Then I got sick in the fall and unable to work I left my job altogether. I don't know how to calculate enough weeks to answer this question. I guess if we could have a week each month and roll the unused time into the next month that could work. Or if the rollover expires ever two to three months, that way there's not too much time accrued and just sitting there.
- 2 months
- No idea
- 1 week
- 2 months
- 1 month
- 12 weeks for new parents seems critical
- 12 weeks
- 12 weeks
- 12 weeks for pregnancy/birth, maybe 9 for taking care of others
- 2-3 weeks
- 8 weeks perhaps
- Past quad bypass with replaced valve & Pacemaker+ 6 months; Giant cell arteritis+ 1.5 yrs.

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- About 5 business days
- Weekends and holidays
- 60 days
- 4 weeks
- 12 weeks
- I would take a 12 week leave when I gave birth, but that isn't yearly. It's a one time thing for us!
- 3 months
- 4-6 weeks
- 12 months minimum.
- None
- Around 3 months or more
- 3 months (no employer benefits from staff who aren't sleeping at night with a newborn!)
- After giving birth it would have made sense to get at least 6 months of paid maternity leave.
- It all depends on medical issues. It's hard to say.
- 12 weeks
- 3-4 months
- About 30 days all together
- Eight weeks minimum for child birth; beyond that I can't comment, because I haven't had the experience
- 8 to 10 weeks
- 3 months
- 6 weeks
- 2-12 weeks, depending on the event
- For childbirth, 6 months to a year off paid would have been beneficial. For surgeries, a month or two would have been sufficient.
- Hopefully none
- 2 weeks
- 16 weeks
- Just when my kids are ill or "exposed"
- I would like a 12 week maternity paid in some way, and sick days as needed.
- Unsure how to answer/quantify
- Ideally after having a child all people who give birth should have a minimum of five months off (with full time pay). Parents who did not give birth should also have a minimum amount of time that they should be able to take off (and get paid) which should be at least 8 weeks. This would also allow for less stress in finding child care, which is a major issue for families.
- two weeks or more
- 3 months
- 1 month
- 30 weeks
- Maybe 2 weeks paid, but maternity leave something like 8-12 weeks at even just 50-75% of my pay would be a lifesaver in family planning
- 3-4 weeks
- 12 weeks paid.

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- That depends heavily on the situation. Surgery recovery varies tremendously, as does caring for a sick family member. I would say childbirth or adoption of a child that is not yet of school age should be 18 months of leave that can be split between the child's parents if desired.
- 1 month
- It's hard to plan for unexpected events like sickness or surgery. It would be nice to have at least 4 weeks available for those types of things, exclusive of parenting or more extensive care work.
- 6 weeks
- I make less than the average weekly wage; I don't see my wage increasing in the future but I see my bills and payments increasing so really Even if I need time off I'm not going to take it
- 4-5 weeks
- some weeks
- 12 weeks minimum
- 2 months
- I'm not sure, it depends on the post surgery recovery time
- 30-60 days
- 300 hours
- One month
- 12-24 weeks
- 10 weeks
- Some years none. Some years months. If you have a baby it would be helpful to be at home until they go to cows milk at a year. If you have a sick family member or you yourself become sick it. Could depend on how sick they get (aka covid/flu be cancer).

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PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE (152 responses)

- I am the breadwinner for my family and the primary caregiver, we can afford for me to take time because I work my ass off to save for it but it is a hardship
- Please support a broad, strong policy that requires everyone, employers and employees to pay into a system and ensure it's available for as many people as possible.
- The cost of healthcare is an integral part of this discussion. As I've watched the quality of benefits decline over the last five plus years, its meant going from a max of \$3000 out of pocket in any given year, to a max of over \$10,000. Sadly we have met that this year and likely will again. That fundamentally changes the time off equation, because I need every penny to keep medical creditors off my back.
- Thank you so much for asking people to comment on this. It's such an important policy initiative that will help so many people. I also think that given where we are with COVID (and how we need to stop treating it like a short term problem), we need to think through what kind of infrastructure needs to exist as people continue to get sick, have long COVID (either themselves or their family members), need to quarantine, etc.
- I am better able to handle a financial strain than most of my friends, but I worry about business I frequent and if their staff is working while sick and I might catch it from that. So I do want everyone to have paid sick leave to help keep the state healthy instead of having people in low paid jobs working while sick
- I think having a state Paid Family & Medical Leave program would be a huge bonus for Maine - both for the state's people and the local economy. Paid Family & Medical Leave would prevent people from being forced to make difficult choices between taking care of themselves (or a close loved one) and losing their income or job.

Looking at the bigger picture, a state Paid Leave benefits program would put us on par with other New England states (MA, CT and RI), which would make us more competitive in the region. It could also help attract and retain talent in Maine's workforce - in a state where a majority of our population is older/retirement age, having more people active in our workforce is critical to our economy.

With that said, the state needs to ensure that the program is comprehensive: (a) employers and workers must contribute to ensure adequate funding and to keep costs low for everyone; (b) it must be affordable for low-wage hourly workers, self-employed folks & small businesses; and (c) it must provide adequate coverage for all of Maine's workers (e.g. part-time workers, immigrants, middle-class folks, etc.). Thank you to the Commission for its work on this important issue!

- I understand that MA has paid family leave that matches both the primary parent and the secondary equally. I'd like to see Maine match that standard.
- I am so grateful you are working for this!
- Paid leave should be paid in full. Also, paid leave should be offered for the death of any child, not just an unborn child.
- I sincerely hope that family leave is approved so that when family members or we ourselves are in need, we are allowed the time necessary. This should be the norm, people should be respected for doing the right thing, not penalized.

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- My family is very financially secure, so we've been able to take advantage of unpaid leave. This is not the case for most families. I want everyone to have access to paid leave.
- Because my spouse has a good job, it is easy for me to feel "comfortable" and taken care of financially. BUT if anything happened to my spouse and their job - my answers to this survey would be different.
- I am a single person.
I raised my Son's single.
As a Senior person now bc that works for themselves and having to have Surgery there is no back up.
I am getting ready for more Major surgery now. No back up.
- It is absolutely critical that we create a paid leave program. I have stable employment and a desk job, but so many new parents have neither. There needs to be a solution for the tens of thousands of Mainers who work multiple jobs, seasonal jobs, and physically demanding jobs, are self-employed, and/or have periods of unemployment or underemployment. The paid leave program should not depend on the whims of an employer, or how long you've worked for that employer, it truly needs to be statewide.
- The question about income is a tricky one b/c my personal income is so low, but my household income is high, which I think illustrates some of the ways this topic can be very gendered. My spouse essentially subsidizes my part-time work so that I am available to provide more family-care -- an inequitable situation in every way and one with implications for women's well-being in the public and private spheres. I do not need paid fmla for income, I need it for job security and knowing that if I were in a "bigger" job and needed time to provide emergency care for my aging parents it would not be a dealbreaker.
- My employer provides combines paid and vacation in the form of PTO. I rarely take vacation days because I need to have time off available to care for my child either because he is sick or school is closed. As we discuss paid leave, it is important to take non-medical caregiving responsibilities into account, as well as the need for actual vacation.
- Thank you for soliciting feedback on this!!
- While being paid for family medical leave would be ideal in an ideal world, we have made do with using our traditional PTO. I would not want may tax resources covering other medical leave.
- Paid parental leave is a necessity and it is disturbing that we do not have sufficient paid parental leave in this country/state. In regard to the birth or adoption of a new child and in order for parents to bond with their children, physically and mentally recover from such a massive life change, time off is necessary. Many parents hurry back to work after much too short of time because they need to get paid, or keep their jobs. This is unacceptable. Maine is a progressive state and we care about those around us. So even for those of us that never plan to get pregnant and have a child, paid parental leave is something we should all care for and strive to get in our state.
- Paid maternity leave should be universal for at least 3 months with the option to extend for up to a year at a reduced salary with no impact to health insurance or retirement benefits. Maternity leave in the US is woefully lacking and quite frankly inhumane. We don't let puppies separate from their mothers at 8 weeks--why is it normal and acceptable for a mother to separate from her infant child at 8 weeks? From my past experience 6 months should be the normal amount of leave -- at the 6 month mark infant sleep is usually more consistent, if you are nursing you likely have an established supply so the stress of returning to work will not greatly

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impact your ability to continue nursing and emotionally I found that I was ready to return to work. When I did return I was able to engage with my responsibilities in a way that I would not have been had I returned to work sooner. Additionally, the fact that we have to use vacation and sick time as part of maternity leave is absurd. In my situation I will return to work with very little, if any, vacation or sick time to use when my children inevitably get sick and when I have to return to the doctor for my own needs post-birth which puts an inordinate amount of stress on my family. I understand having children is a choice, but it is a choice we should encourage, and current leave policies arguably disincentive having children. I hope that 6 months of maternity leave will become the norm--it may not ever benefit me but I feel passionately that our current system is inadequate and harmful.

- I do not believe employers should have to contribute to family leave. Small employers can't afford it. I'm both an employer and an employee (I own the S-corp). I do not support this unless I can also use the benefit as the owner/employee.
- We should not have to choose work over family. Infants need to bond with their parents, parents need to bond with their children, physical recovery is critical as is the opportunity to rest and recover during the day as we care for our infants around the clock.
- This is so important!
- My name is Meghan Barker and I am happy to be a part of this process. Please contact me if further comments about my experience would help. 207-323-0725
- I'm from Maine and would like to raise a family here but paid family leave, healthcare coverage, and childcare are major factors in that decision.
- It seems when you are out sick for an extended period, the medical bills pile up, yet the income drops to 60% of base pay. With the additional expenses, it is impossible to stay afloat financially. Some income is better than no income, but my employer chooses not to pay at 100% so people won't get lazy.
- Paid Family Medical Leave is RIGHT FOR MAINE! It just makes sense especially in places that work with young children and families.
- I work in a company with a TON of benefits, but I still have to purchase short term disability insurance in case something greater happens than what my leave could allow. FMLA is great but only a partial answer if we're still missing the pay to support ourselves and maintain bills.
- this is an employer responsibility or needs to be paid by a progressive tax such as income/wealth. An employee tax contribution is not appropriate for folks who are already stretched. While there are individual benefits to consider, the far greater benefit is for employers with workforce retention.

Benefit portability here is really important, as is making sure that this benefit includes middle and higher income workers so that everybody is getting the same system.

- Our country's lack of guaranteed paid leave is heartless and a disgrace. Life is filled with unpredictable moments, and we are not machines. Our bodies, our minds, our feelings, are important and we all deserve the dignity of being able to tend to those as needed throughout life. It's essential to our humanity and our ability to live a full, connected life.
- Poor people can't afford crisis without support like paid leave. Hardworking people shouldn't have to choose between their job and their health.
- My spouse is Canadian, I was born and raised in Maine - it's been a struggle for us to logically justify continuing to live in Maine when there are provincial and national programs in Canada that support parents in hugely important ways. Parental leave has proven to be a smart

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investment - contributions from employees, government, and employers are paid back in full by having healthy kids, productive families and employees, and stronger communities. If Maine is going to attract young people and families to live here again, investing in strong, robust paid leave is the way to do it.

- So.e people also don't recover from giving birth until 3 months because of major surgery like a c section so how could they continue to provide for themselves with out the help?
- Thank you for all your work on this. Paid family and medical leave has always been incredibly important for healthy families and communities, never more than now in the pandemic.
- It breaks my heart that babies when they are most vulnerable don't have their parents because they need to return to work. All research on the 4th trimester shows they should still be in our womb, but are born at that age because of their head size. We need to give babies at least 3 months with their mom and hopefully the other parent too.
- I would love to see Maine be a national leader on this issue. Family and Medical Leave is an education issue, a workforce issue, a racial justice issue... it permeates so many different parts of society. We need to do better.
- I have been working as a temp at a large company for 3+ years. They have no plans to hire me as a true employee because they might eliminate my position in the next year or so. I am an employee of the temp agency but I only get 5 days of paid time off per year, and it does not increase over time like it does for traditional employees at most companies. If I had to take more than 5 days in a year, it would be unpaid. Therefore, I usually do not take vacation time so I can save my time if I get sick. I only take vacation days if I still have PTO time available at the end of the year.
- I am not sure what the "right" answer is to Question 19. 70% felt fair. I would want to do more research on what other countries and US states do, and model Maine's system based on success elsewhere.

Any movement on this is an improvement. No mother should have to go through what I (and my husband) went through upon the birth of our first child. It has forever changed me. I sincerely needed time off, physical therapy, and mental health counseling. I got none of that. I have dealt with the repercussions of that situation in the years since, including a diagnosis of fibromyalgia, which is suspected to be traced back to that time in 2014.

- Thank you!!
- While all the areas mentioned above are important to consider and support I think there is a very big gap in this survey. And I am disappointed. One so obviously that has been missed. With the elderly population Maine has, not one of your questions addresses specifically the care many of them will need. And, most likely it will have to be a family member who will be taking time off from work who will need to do the care which will come in many shapes and forms. Getting someone up, fed and dressed in the morning may cause the family member to be late for work. Rides to doctors appointments so they are present for what could be confusing and overwhelming, act as an advocate, emergency room visits because of falls, food support by shopping and cooking is time consuming, needing to take time off from work but still needing an income to help support misc items for said elder. It is a huge problem here in Maine, one I would hope this bill would support! And I feel if this does address elder care it should be better explained and would be an opportunity for promoting this bill. Child care, elder care and everything else inbetween.
- The paid leave situation in this country is shameful.

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- Some companies are very small and having employees out for long periods of time would be a burden on them and co-workers plus it is an expensive program - not wise in this economy.
- My husband and I are fortunate to work for organizations that are flexible and willing to provide some financial support during leave. However, for most of our friends having children, this is not the case. We used to live in Washington, DC, where they passed paid family leave a few years ago; as a native Mainer and resident again, I would love to see our state adopt a similar policy. It's unimaginable to think that in country, paid family leave is not universal. Women should not have to chose between having a family and working because their employers do not provide leave.
- We are so far behind the rest of the wealthy & developed world when it comes to parental/family & general medical leave! It's deeply saddening to me that we don't prioritize the mental & physical health of our workers (& future workers). Hopefully one day we will catch up. Thank you for your efforts to develop a leave program in Maine.
- If we value being taken care of when we need it - we will value the women and men who do the caring by giving them they time and pay they need. No one should have to take unpaid time off to care for another human - ever.
- All Mainers need paid family & parental leave that provides enough room to not only deal with emergencies, but to have space to breathe as well, especially in the era of pandemics.
- The amount of wages needed is completely dependent on whether we continue to be a 2 family income household or whether I am the sole income. Additionally, it depends on whether I am still paying daycare fees which are a huge factor in our cost of living.
- Please do the right thing.
- The biggest problem I could have if I needed to take significant time away from work is that my bills would not stop. In particular I'd worry about student loan payments. I also wonder if I'd be able to keep my job if I needed significant time off.
- My personal experience of employment with co-workers (essential workers), is they are not able to take sick time, simply because they cannot afford to loose their pay. in restaurant work (my place of employ) stakes are high for transmitting illness. sadly personal finances seem to outweigh community health. significant paid sick time and family leave time might begin to shift that paradigm.
- Expecting employees to report when sick should be a crime.
- I'm an older citizen, so I will speak from that experience. Paid Family Leave is a good start. And of course, the other issue is quality day care. I stayed home for a few years because we moved to a new city with small kids and my 'work' was building our network, getting to know the resources and neighbors and schools. I am glad for that work and feel so many families need that time to build connection.
- Paid family leave is so important! I hope something will be enacted soon enough that we can participate. My husband has his own business too, but is looking for a job so we could have some leave. It's a shame that this is tied to traditional employment.
- With the cost of living and the idea that my life should not have to change drastically regarding finances during an illness or maternity leave, it makes sense that my paycheck to stay the same.

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I give a lot of myself to the hospital I work for and would love to not have to sacrifice more to care for my family.

- We couldn't afford our bills if I received less than my full paycheck.
- People need this to care for their children & aging parents. Also there are times when just 6 weeks of m/paternity leave is insufficient.
- #19 N/A to my situation.
- When I was making less than \$1000 a week I was unable to manage bills, childcare etc now it's a struggle but do-able as a single parent. With this amount I'm still unable to save so still only one broken down car, illness/injury or house repair away from financial disaster. I receive 0 state or federal benefits.
- Earlier before everything was paid time off we also had sick time. We had coworkers who used sick time for vacations rather than use as intended. To eliminate the ethical issues we lost sick time and it all became lumped - holiday, vacation, and sick - as PTO.
- Paid Family Leave is good for the economy and the next generation. \$735 billion went to the military. We can afford to invest in families!
- I don't really understand the last question, but since I'm on the upper end of the earning bracket, I'm going with the \$1,000.
- We expect human mothers to leave their babies at 6 weeks to return to work when we don't take puppies from their moms until after 8 weeks. Dogs get better maternity benefits than the women in Maine.
- We really need to establish some sort of maternity leave for Maine moms! This is a serious problem.
- Please, please help make it possible for me to have and raise my kids in Maine. I feel so lucky to have grown up here myself but am terrified of raising my future children here considering the cost of living and lack of support. It's hard to know just how good we could have it (looking at how Sweden treats its families) and know that the government doesn't care enough about citizens to do anything to improve the situation. If you want young people to stay in Maine, if you want our aging population to have any hope, if you want to retain residents and foster a booming, family friendly, socially conscious economy, everyone in this state will be benefited. Taking care of families takes care of everyone, and to willingly ignore the issue of paid time off would be inhumane and an egregious mistake.
- Although I have made a contingency plan because our system of allowing people to care for family and new babies is abysmal, we absolutely need some kind of guaranteed paid family leave now. It's an abomination that we have nothing.
- Thank you for caring about the well being of Mainers :)
- Honestly this wouldn't impact me personally that much, but it's a crucial step in our social networks and gender parity here in Maine (and globally). Women need adequate time to care give and still earn their wages. Care giving is greatly underappreciated even though it keeps society going. Having a paid leave law would give that care giving monetary value and greatly ease financial burdens that are unevenly placed on women.
- Please help us improve our support to hard working Mainers who want to better support themselves and their loved ones. We need a break!
- FMLA should be eligible if you've worked somewhere 7-8months. That way it's likely if you're pregnant you already know you are when accepting the job. I took a job and shortly thereafter found out I was pregnant and didn't qualify for FMLA because of the 1 year rule

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- I would like to see family leave that defines caregiving responsibilities broadly to include non-family members who depend on the employee and emergency care for children and dependents who do not have a serious medical condition (i.e. childcare closed, etc.)
- There are zero providers within Maine that can handle my surgical needs, so I will have to travel out-of-state to get appropriate care, remain at that location post-surgery, and then travel back to finish the recuperation period. That all adds to the total cost.
- I was fortunate that while working, I was always able to provide care to any family member who needed it. But when I was the one who needed the care, my husband didn't have that flexibility in his work schedule. It put a great deal of stress on him trying to juggle "nursing care", child care, & his job. Our children had to help him. We had helpful neighbors. No wage-earner should have to worry about job security on top of the burden of caring for a family member.
- I have enough savings to survive without an income for a few months, but I wouldn't be able to afford COBRA... In addition to wage replacement, Leave should provide continued benefits, and employment security.
- Thank you for this work. It would change so many lives for the better.
- THANK YOU for doing this. Amen.
- Any amount of paid family and medical leave is better than nothing. Even if we didn't get 100%, at least enough to cover the remaining percentage of what a short term or long term disability insurance would cover.
- Not sure if this information is helpful but I work remotely for a company based in NYC, so I believe my FML is based on NY law?
- Thank you all for your advocacy. I think FMLA should be easier to take and to take in a more flexible way. It was a challenging process to navigate and with a pregnancy I had many months of notice. In an emergency situation I wouldn't have the time or bandwidth to figure that out again. It should be something that is built in to HR systems like PTO so that we can use it at the drop of a hat for instance when kids have to quarantine and suddenly the childcare you relied on vanishes. I am sure employers will feel like employees will take advantage, but we have to help people to take care of their families, especially during a pandemic. When I was worried about my mom and coordinating her care at work, I was not the best employee that I could be, and I couldn't be a fully present daughter to my mother as well.
- Please get this law passed. People need this and paid federal FMLA is elusive. I work in disability and absence and it's heartbreaking to hear what people have to go through just to have a baby or care for a sick parent or child. This is vital.
- Please advocate for this, it is so needed. Ty.
- Mental illness is not considered a health issue
- Paid family leave is commonplace in nearly every other developed country in the world! Not having it here in the us has really impacted my desire and ability to have children. I would definitely have tried to start a family earlier if paid leave was standard.
- Thank you for doing this work! I can't tell you how much this opportunity would positively impact our lives.

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- Feel free to reach out for more information, I am an experience Lived Expertise advocate regarding the crisis of poverty and food insecurity.
Rebekah Lane - rebekahmfalla@gmail.com
207-542-4749
- As someone who is self employed and the primary breadwinner, I have to save for years in order to take time to be pregnant, give birth, and get critical quality time with my new baby.
- I rarely have made over 20,000\$ A year in maine. I'm almost 36. Have studied yoga in Thailand and India for 400 hours I have studied 180 hours of Ayurveda in India. I was a dancer and was beginning to teach. When I worked for a successful restaurant and a bar, I budgeted super well and saved enough money to do those trainings. Now that I'm injured I have since re-entered the work force, October of 2020 in childcare for minimum wage, then I tried to wait tables, for a few months in the summer. Managed to save enough to attempt to rest and heal and finally figure out what's wrong with my body so I could finally try to heal. Ran out of money (almost-I'm good at budgeting so with the 1500 I had left, could have made it another few months_.but need to think ahead, I don't have any back up) now I am still awaiting the medical community to ÷diagnose me and give me a plan/though the last doctor said incomplete sci, then had to change it and request, ÷more testing. So I am using medical marijuana to ÷mask and ÷band aid a serious injury, seriously affecting my life, and injuring myself further. I do not ÷enjoy the medical marijuana. It is affective as medicine. My threshold for pain is high. I will work until I can't. I will pray for a miracle or for the medical community to finally give me the help I need to attempt to get better, or to just know this is how I need live my life. I'm in a lot of pain. Without medical marijuana I am very cripple. With it I am in a lot of pain still, I don't know my limits. I'm tough. I push through anything. The pressure to need to work to survive when you don't have any financial help or are not privileged enough to have someone's help is impossible to maintain. This is a cycle of further ruining my body and in turn damaging my entire quality of life and future. The medical community needs serious examining. It is unethical what they have done, and how I have been treated. It literally goes against the oath they take as doctor. The cycle is exactly why more needs to be done. Much more. Many people are overlooked in our current system. I am one but also, know and speak with so many.
- People never know how hard things can be. Blessings to all.
- I believe this is a needed benefit, but not something our govt needs to supplement in full. We are supplementing so many programs, many are mis-used/abused and govts just don't manage or police the programs well to avoid the abuse (ie unemployment). This is making it harder for those that really need the benefit. So, I'm skeptical to add new, expanded benefits.
- My company offers paid parental leave at 12 weeks for the parent who gives birth and 8 weeks for the parent who does not. Then 12 weeks for foster or adoption for the "primary parent" and 8 weeks for the "not primary parent." I think it's up to 3 weeks for miscarriage. Bereavement is being made unlimited, and we'll now offer paid FMLA only for an employees own medical condition. But we aren't supposed to advertise this widely because employees might abuse FMLA. But bereavement no problem take unlimited time off a random obituary you found? I support all paid time off but employers not promoting paid sick time is super sketchy.
- As a women who's worked most of her life in the capitalist country of the US I believe more paid time off for various life events would greatly benefit our societies happiness and over all health and well being.

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- These questions are a little tough for me as a retired person to answer, both because I don't know current wages but also because several questions assumed that I was in the workforce
- Even though leave isn't offered to me or really an option I still feel lucky that I work from home and the owners of my company are flexible. I have to do some work to get paid but they are willing to work with me.

So many women I've known have had to go back to work just a week or two after delivering or risk losing their job because they aren't covered by FMLA, or just can't afford to use FMLA.

In my mid twenties I hurt my shoulder very badly and had to have reconstructive surgery. I was forced to give up my apartment and stay with my mom to be able to take unpaid FMLA to recover from surgery. Thankfully I was at the end of my lease and had the family support to be able to do that.

- Hoping one day ME and/or USA has more supportive family leave policies one day
- Maternity/ Paternity Leave is a joke. Insurance is also a joke.
- Paid family leave would have helped me greatly in growing my family. We struggled financially, had marital struggles due to the financial hardship, and I was not able to actually focus at times on bonding with my babies because we were stressed about money, returning to work sooner than desired, etc. My husband had NO paid time or unpaid time off option for paternity leave, so I shouldered all of the childcare while also trying to recover from childbirth. Families deserve a chance to grow and flourish in the early years, rather than children being born and handed over to other caregivers or the parents struggling financially and becoming so stressed that the infants are born into a stressful, conflict ridden environment. We want better for our children, and we need equitable chances for children to thrive in the early years.
- I want to be clear, that I do think PFML is important, I think it should be offered by employers if at all possible even a little, if that is all they can do or earned by the employees. I do not think that those that work should have to pay for other peoples PFML, at all! I do feel it would be another government program and just enable others not to work. The working class would be paying for others, again!. I believe in earning you way in life, if you enable people, many will take advantage. Less Government handouts (Programs) is what is needed. This may sound heartless, it is not meant to be. We all know that there are people/families that can use some help, if a program for them to earn some PFML as an incentive, I could see that for those that are not offered by small businesses. Key word is "earned" Not hand outs, do not make it easy for people to do nothing and reap the benefits that the working class has earned. To much of that going on now.
- Paid leave means 100% paid for whomever needs it. It is particularly important for women and babies after giving birth. There is so much research pointing to this and the US is so far behind. 6 months minimum would drastically increase positive health outcomes for both mothers and babies. Research also shows giving paid leave to fathers increases equity in a household and positive outcomes on relationships. This should be a federal benefit, but Maine can also make this happen in our state and lead the nation. Thank you for your work to make this happen!

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- I really hope this can change the university system.
- Maine is the oldest state in the country. Young people cannot afford to have children and those who have them anyway often have to drop out of the workforce and experience poverty.
- I chose 100%, thinking that taxes will be deducted and I would end up with about 60%
- Parents need more support as they are caring for young children. They need more time off after birth, more flexibility, shorter work weeks when children are young, and guarantees that their job will be there when they return. Caring for an aging parent can require taking time off unexpectedly as a result of a fall, injury, or hospitalization. Families need financial support to care for their children and families members. They need flexibility to take time off. Individuals should have guaranteed sick leave to deal with their own or a family member's illness with out worrying they will lose their jobs.
- I'm retired, so difficult to answer most of the questions but while working I had some real bastards for bosses and some really wonderful ones - the roll of the dice. Sexual harassments was an issue where ever I worked and handling it tricky if I wanted to keep my much-needed jobs. I always feared I would lose my job - sgl parent of 2 but was most fortunate that things worked out okay. I do, however, know others that aren't as fortunate as I and it isn't right. Dealing with a family member who experienced domestic violence was difficult - terrifying really as it took me a long time before I could talk her into leaving as she feared repercussions. Don't forget the retired population living below the poverty line - SS checks are disgraceful for so many and so many in Congress intend to keep them impoverished and would remove all SS if they could. Keep up the good work!
- ALL people deserve to have access to paid family medical leave -- new parents, people who are sick or have loved ones who are, people who have loved ones deployed in the military. Our current system only allows people at the top who have the privilege of privatized benefits, and that hurts everyone. This benefit is a right, and if businesses cannot take this on, their business models are not sustainable without the exploitation of workers. We should not be prioritizing businesses over people. Universal Paid Family and Medical Leave will help ALL Mainers.
- "Paid family leave recognizes the fact that we are all human. Availability of paid family leave places value on the spiritual, emotional and physical care of our families. there is a lot of talk about children being our future and little support for parents to care for them if they must work outside the home."
- Income inequality denies our societies ability to achieve zero homelessness, zero food insecurity and zero poverty. Why isn't this a logical goal of a civic society.
- I'm retired now, but remember vividly how hard it was juggling 2 kids, husband with many chronic health problems, and work. Getting ready to help my daughter, who's expecting her first child, in a new job with no paid family leave accruing before her due date. She's the sole income provider and it's hard to see her torn between wanting to stay home as long as would be best for the family, but worried about whether her family can afford it. Paid family leave is so, so needed.
- "I have worked for the State of Maine for the past three years (ever since graduating from UMaine) and I have been grateful so many times for the ability to use paid leave. Working 8 to 5, Monday to Friday, severely limits the times available for doctor's appointments, especially when I work in Augusta and need to see a specialist in Lewiston or Portland. My first year at work I woke up one morning with a severe case of vertigo. I was so dizzy that I could barely walk to my kitchen, never mind drive in to work. That day I didn't have to worry about losing money or facing backlash at work-- I just called in sick and focused on getting

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better.

Taking sick time when I need it ensures that I am healthy and can work at the best of my ability. When I know that I have protection from lost income and retaliation at work, I can take care of my health without fear. It makes me feel safer knowing that my colleagues can do the same, and none of us are forced or incentivized to be at work while they are ill."

- The biggest thing I learned from the UFT in the NYC DOE is that humans are more than our value in labor. By creating systems where we can center our own well-being we not only are more productive in the long run in the workplace, but we are better members of all of the communities we partake in.
- Paid family leave is essential for everyone. Everyone will experience one or more of the life events. There should be state and federal standards rather than relying on the generosity and decency of an employer. Very few employers challenge themselves to do more than what is required by law. I have been an HR professional for 20+ years and try to make workplaces humane for all through paid leave programs.
- It's not good enough to just secure pto for employees. There needs to be an additional pool of time, without any contribution from the employee, and for longer than FMLA allows. Anything less is not worth it. It's just not enough.
- I don't think the government should be involved in providing paid time off. Maine already screwed up my vacation and sick time with the new earned time off law this year, which is something they should not have gotten involved with. People need to work hard and choose their jobs and careers around taking care of themselves and their families. People should not overborrow or overspend beyond their ability to be away from work if necessary. The government should not get involved, it will just screw things up
- Thank you for this work.
- I'd prefer this be an "emergency use" account for unexpected events that happen a few times over the course of one's career, not a certain number of days a year.
- They have now made it that short term disability you only have to be out 14 days and it goes into effect. I cannot afford to live on only 60% of my pay.
- My income is less than the "average" in Maine. If I lose my spouse, I lose their income of \$950/week and their health insurance for myself and our children.
- We don't deserve to pay in to get a benefit like paid leave. Workers are grossly undervalued. I also don't think it's the responsibility of an employer to cover emergencies when they happen to employees. That's how you kill small business. It's the responsibility of our government to expand our current programs and social safety nets to cover this. If the rich can take rockets into orbit for fun, we have enough wealth the sick, hurt, disabled and their caregivers can have paid time off.
- It's hard to believe that a state like Maine doesn't support working parents with Paid Family Leave. Especially considering COVID, we've seen more and more women leave the workforce to take care of their families. We've seen people struggle to care for sick or aging parents while juggling their family life and careers. It's not right, and people should be able to take the time off they need to care for each other and their communities - without falling into financial ruin.
- Clearly, the government is better positioned to provide leave. This would take strain off of small businesses especially.
- As a freelancer, I have no support. I was unemployed this year and I was only able to make it by having unemployment benefits. While on unemployment and working on contract I was able

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to do more volunteering with several different organizations than I've ever been able to before. If there was some sort of regular basic income for me, I would be able to do more community work. If I didn't fear what taking time off would do to my bank account and my ability to pay rent and buy groceries, I would be working in my community more. Unfortunately I've had to take a large step back because I now work 5 different minimum wage contract jobs. And I'm a substitute teacher. Teacher especially need this now. I have a coworker who has two kids and has struggled greatly during the pandemic to care for her kids with her husband who works full time. Thankfully she has in-laws close by.

- It would be great to include the self employed in this!
- A lot of jobs you earn time off based on how long you've been at a company, having access to time off isn't a privilege, it's a human right.
- Please consider that these funds would be used to help families maintain their ability to pay for bills and food for their families. However, if they are recuperating from an illness or surgery, or caring for a family member who is, they'll also likely have hefty American hospital bills to cover on top of their normal expenses. This type of legislation is long overdue.
- When my daughter was born in 2006, I was a part-time salaried employee of a company I had joined 5 months earlier. I wasn't eligible for paid leave, and they weren't even required to hold my position (though they did). This was incredibly stressful during an already difficult time (my daughter was 6 weeks premature). Guaranteed paid leave for *all* employees would level the playing field and make Maine employers more competitive.
- We need to do something about elder Care in this country. Nursing home suck. It's too hard to find reliable and affordable In-Home Care. And no one could afford to stop working to take care of their parents. At least we can't and it's terrible.
- If paying into it should be 100%
- I understand that 100% replacement is expensive however, replacing some of people's wages would help more people take care of themselves and others who need them to live.
- I selected 80% of weekly wages, but honestly anything would help. Being a parent in this world feels like a unique form of punishment. I don't know why people choose to have children anymore and although I love my baby dearly and am looking forward to our second, if I were to do it over again knowing what I know now about the complete lack of support, I wouldn't choose parenthood again.
- Who has \$1000 /week that is more than most I know get and I have a degree.
- It's sad that I have to fill this out. People are dying at work in this country and we do literally nothing to help them.
- I have been very fortunate. I support family medical leave for everyone
- During at home recovery, medical costs continue. And many of those are not covered, e.g. ambulance transport that is non-emergency, such as from hospital to recovery, and then home.
- The system already exists for family leave and we don't need further assistance
- Thank you for collecting data.
- This is a bad idea and will make Maine less competitive. You should concentrate on cutting taxes and entitlements then business will come to Maine and be forced to pay higher wages and benefits to attract employees.
- How would a person or persons being out on medical leave effect the income of the company they work for? How much time would a person be allowed to take off from a company before they were let go because they maybe a disruption to the work process

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- No paid leave hurts families and it hurts businesses. Women are opting out of the workforce entirely because it doesn't make sense to maintain a job that can't accommodate a new baby. Parents are struggling to make ends meet, struggling to put the pieces together to maintain income and a reliable job while trying to do the most intense job of all time: welcome an infant into the world. Until we provide a little breathing room, families and businesses alike will continue to suffer.
- The covid pandemic has changed the game for people with young children. For almost two years, I have had to work full time while also helping to home school my children and/or care for them at home due to a covid exposure at school and mandatory quarantine, which for a while was happening almost every single week to one child or another. I've also had a baby and now a toddler in daycare, which also closes for a week at least once a month for covid exposures. It's appalling the lack of help that parents have gotten from our state and federal governments...we don't just need money like the child tax credit; we need reliable, affordable child care and we need job security. We need for there to not be 3-year-long waiting lists at every preschool that our children will never come off of. Also, my oldest child has an IEP at school and covid totally disrupted his ability to receive services (including medical services such as occupational therapy and speech therapy). It would have been great to have some support around this at the time. My son is now 11 and basically lost out on 2 important years of quality speech therapy, and now they're not sure he'll ever develop the ability to pronounce his "R" and "L" sounds.
- I would need 100% of my current salary, which is not \$52,000 a year
- A graduated system might work well%—something like eight weeks at full pay and then it scales down from there for additional time off with a cap. I believe there are models for this construct in one of the other (180+) countries that offer paid family leave. Thank you for doing this work!
- \$600 per week would be sufficient, but this is around 80-90% of my weekly wages
- 0% I would rather use my savings than pay another tax to the state of Maine
- I work remotely for a company not based in Maine. Please consider us in the rules.
- My husband lost his job and he still waiting for the work authorization, so I am myself who provide everything at home.
- Our parental leave system is totally and completely inequitable and depends on a patchwork of solutions from different states and companies. This leads to unequal outcomes for children and parents. Maine should do all it can to advocate for paid family leave for all people in Maine to improve outcomes for children and parents. Our children are our future and it is critical that parents have the financial stability to provide the best care possible for their children. As a state that loses more people that it gains each year, Maine needs to focus on caring for families so that they can stay here.
- I did not answer #19 as as do not make that much money. 60 % of their pay is a reasonable figure I believe for others. The \$1000 figure for Franklin County is very high, not representative of the majority of workers here.
- Thank you for working on this!
- alt%—s disgraceful that we%—are the only wealthy country that doesn%—at provide paid parental leave.
- As a young, low income parent I%—ave struggled for the past 6 years to find and maintain a job that is flexible with having a family. Upon graduating college I%—ave found a secure job I like. However it always weighs on me that I%—am supposed to get forty hours a week and how my family has had to take a back seat while I work my job(WHICH is HELPING PARENTS). I had to

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switch my son's providers for speech, OT and PT because I couldn't fit in the trips to Bangor with the job. It's been over a month with CDS(a great program) but he still hasn't received services. It's frustrating if I could have taken time off I wouldn't have switched him and he would still be getting services he needs

- I am presently collecting retirement, but take part time jobs to supplement this.
- Paid family leave is so much more than just being about to provide for immediate needs. It would help so many people feel more comfortable in their jobs, increase performance, mitigate burnout, and help economic stability for everyone in the community. The initial cost of time and money would add to a longer term return on investment for the state.
- Would love to connect with this organization. I'm in this industry on the carrier / claims-paying side, know lots about other states' paid leave programs, integration with Disability Insurance, systems, call centers, etc. Very very supportive of Paid Family and Medical Leave efforts. Kevin O'Sullivan KFOSULL@GMAIL.COM. Cumberland.