



1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Lily Eskelsen García
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Vice President

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Kim A. Anderson
Executive Director

February 11, 2020

Workforce Protections Subcommittee
Education and Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we would like to submit for the record the comments below in connection with today's hearing, "Balancing Work, Health, and Family: The Case for Expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act." The need for action is clear: 81 percent of workers do not have paid family leave through their jobs, and 60 percent lack access to paid personal medical leave through their employer.

We urge you to modify the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to address the need to:

- Cover education support professionals—like classroom aides, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and school nurses—as well as other state and local government employees not currently covered by the law
- Guarantee that workers can keep their health insurance while on leave and return to their jobs, without penalty, after taking leave
- Broaden the scope of acceptable reasons for taking paid leave to include circumstances such as organ donations and parental bereavement
- Define "family" in an inclusive way that reflects today's realities—for example, including members of LGBTQ couples and guardian grandparents among those eligible for paid leave

The overwhelming majority of voters—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike—support legislation to achieve these goals. We thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments and stand ready to work with you to advance them.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association