

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 19, 2019

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Inhofe, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Reed and Ranking Member Thornberry:

As you begin conference discussions on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for (FY) Fiscal Year 2020, we respectfully ask that the Senate recede to the House position on sections 1121 through 1126, which includes the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA) that will grant 12 weeks of paid family leave to federal employees in all instances covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

America's workers should be able to take time to address their own health needs, care for a loved one, or welcome a new child. However, every year thousands of federal workers must make the impossible choice between caring for themselves or their family, and their economic well-being. This choice puts a terrible burden on federal workers and their families, and, as a result, the federal government and taxpayers suffer as well. Instituting paid family leave for federal workers would ease the burden on these workers and their families, as well as have important ancillary benefits for the government.

The inclusion of FEPLA would assist in the recruitment of workers to join the federal workforce. Federal agencies are already struggling to recruit and retain young talent. Just 6 percent of the federal workforce is currently under the age of thirty, while roughly 40 percent is eligible to retire within the next three years.¹ Two-thirds of current college students have indicated that balancing work and family is a priority in their careers.² As younger workers are becoming a larger proportion of the overall workforce, taking their concerns into account when determining workplace policies is increasingly important for the federal government.

Instituting paid family leave would also help retain current federal workers. According to OPM data from 2008, women of childbearing age were 31 percent more likely to quit federal employment than men of the same age.³ By granting federal workers paid family leave alone, the federal government could prevent the departure of 2,650 female employees per year, according to one study.⁴ Further, when workers have access to paid leave, worker turnover has been proven to decline and loyalty increases.

¹ Partnership for Public Service. (2017). Preparing for the Federal Workforce of the Future. Retrieved 21 February 2019, from <https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/e0fe01ed96f44ecba261a1f89b628356-1522350873.pdf>

² Miller, K., Suppan Helmuth, A., & Farabee-Siers, R. (2009). The Need for Paid Parental Leave for Federal Employees: Adapting to a Changing Workforce. Retrieved 21 February 2019, from Institute for Women's Policy.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.* at 2.

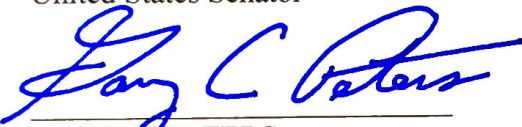
Prior increases in satisfaction with family friendly policies at federal agencies were shown to reduce turnover intention by 37.5 percent, and the inclusion of FEPLA would likely have similar effects for current and future federal workers.⁵

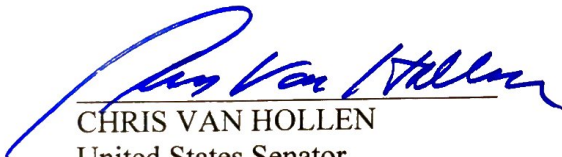
Important to note in this is that the inclusion of FEPLA will also have minimal budgetary implications. Studies of the effects of paid leave on the federal government have shown that providing paid leave for federal employees would save the government at least \$50 million annually in turnover and replacement costs.⁶ These long-term savings are reinforced by pay-for provisions in the NDAA to ensure that this proposal does not add to the deficit, making this truly a common sense proposal.

We appreciate your support and ask that the Senate recede to the House position on sections 1121 through 1126 in the final conference report. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.


Sincerely,

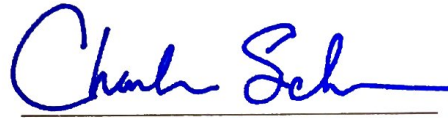

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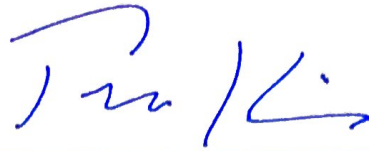

DOUG JONES
United States Senator

⁵ Kim, J., & Wiggins, M. E. (2011, September). Family-Friendly Human Resource Policy: Is It Still Working in the Public Sector?. *Public Administration Review*, 71(5), 728-739.

⁶ Miller, *supra* note 2, at 2.



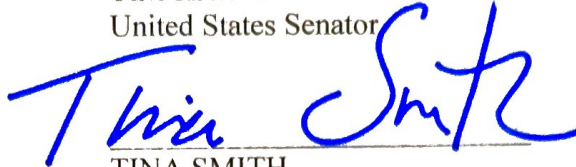
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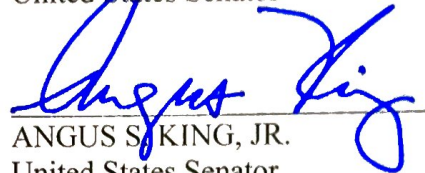
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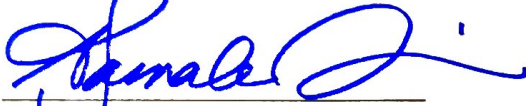
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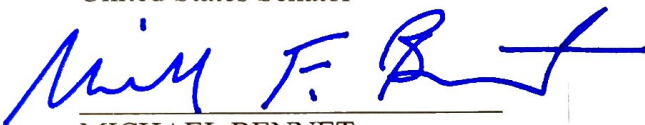
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United States Senator



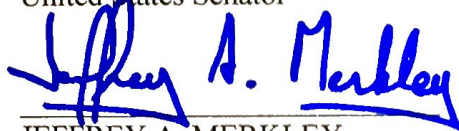
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