

California Work *and* Family Coalition

Public Policy Platform 2009 – 2010

The Problem

California's working families are under siege. They face historic challenges balancing workplace demands and family caregiving responsibilities.

Did you know that:

- ◆ 70% of U.S. families with children have all adults in the workforce.
- ◆ One in four families takes care of an adult or elderly relative.
- ◆ 10% of U.S. workers care both for children and an elderly parent.
- ◆ California has the second highest percentage of multi-generational households in the country.
- ◆ There are 4 million adults in California caring for a family member or friend with a chronic or disabling condition. These caregivers provide 4.3 billion hours of informal care valued at approximately \$45 billion.

Too many of California's working families are forced to choose between keeping their jobs and caring for their families' health. In this challenging economy, preserving good quality jobs is critical—jobs that allow workers both to support their families and be productive employees. Transformative public policies are needed to make our workplaces work for 21st century families.

The Solution

Working families have fundamental rights to financially sustain and to care for themselves and their loved ones. We support policies that help California workers preserve their jobs and fulfill their caregiving responsibilities.

Paid Sick Days

Nearly 6 millions Californians—over 40% of all workers in the state—can not take time off when they or someone in their family is ill, negatively impacting family and community health. Across demographic, economic, ethnic and party lines, three in four Californians support a law to guarantee workers paid sick days. The Coalition supports guaranteeing the right of all California workers to earn paid sick days to care for themselves or a sick family member so that no one will be forced to work sick because of fear of reprisal, losing their job, or losing pay.

Expansion of Paid and Unpaid Family Leave

Many California workers can not take time off to care for their sick or disabled family members without losing pay or risking job loss. Studies show that over half of employed Californians expect they will need to take a family or medical leave from work in the next five years. The Coalition supports expanding and strengthening paid and unpaid family leave to allow more workers the opportunity to care for loved ones without jeopardizing their financial security.

Employer Discrimination Based on Family Caregiving Responsibilities

Although the vast majority of workers are responsible for the care of a family member, employers continue to make unfair employment decisions against workers because of their family responsibilities. Research shows that mothers are often paid less and are less likely to be hired than non-mothers with the same qualifications. Male employees are often penalized at work when they take an active role in caring for their children or sick family members. The Coalition supports expanding protection from workplace discrimination because of familial status or family responsibilities.

Rise to the Challenge

Make California's working families a priority in this legislative session. Speak out, champion and vote for policies that allow Californians to keep their jobs and care for their families. Show your support for working families by signing on to this platform today.

The California Work and Family Coalition is a diverse coalition of advocates, community groups and labor unions that promotes family friendly workplace policies for California's working families through policy work and grassroots activism. For more information about the Coalition or this Platform, contact the Labor Project for Working Families at (510) 643-7088 or info@working-families.org.