



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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California Continues to Lead the Nation on Paid Family Leave Policy
California's Landmark Paid Leave Program Receives Necessary Update

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — George Halvorson, Chairman of the First 5 California Commission, and Camille Maben, Executive Director of First 5 California, praised Governor Jerry Brown, Assemblymember Jimmy Gomez, and Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson for signing AB 908, a bill that increases workers' access to the Paid Family Leave program, especially for the state's lowest and moderate income workers.

"Research is clear: the first months and years of each child's life are crucial to life success, as over 80% of a child's brain development is completed in the first three years of life," said Mr. Halvorson. "This bill allows more parents the opportunity to spend time talking, reading, and singing to their children in those first key months, setting their children on a positive life path."

California's 12-year-old landmark program, the first in the nation, is still only one of three active Paid Family Leave policies nationwide. The current program is fully-funded by California workers and allows workers to take up to six weeks paid leave at 55% of their monthly salary to bond with a newborn or adopted child during those first key months of a child's life. According to a state report, California's current Paid Family Leave program is inaccessible to our lowest and moderate income workers who can't afford the 45% pay cut to care for their newborns.

AB 908, signed by the Governor today, will eliminate the current program's one-week without pay provision, and will increase the wage replacement rate to 70% for the state's lowest income workers, and 60% for the rest of workers—who are already contributing 100% to the fund, but cannot afford to access their own benefits.

"I applaud the Assemblymember Gomez, Senator Jackson, and Governor Brown for their leadership on this key issue to better support young children and working families. This much needed update to our Paid Family Leave program takes steps to eliminate some of the huge barriers working parents face to spending those key first months of life bonding with their babies," said Ms. Maben.

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Last week, New York set a new national standard with 12-week paid leave, and the City of San Francisco voted on a groundbreaking paid leave policy to provide full wage replacement. As Governor Brown signs AB 908 into law today, California continues to be a national leader in ensuring workers have access to the paid leave necessary for parents to spend the first key months of their babies' lives establishing a foundation for their children's life success.

"I look forward to the next policy debate on how to extend California's leave policy beyond the current short six weeks to better support our children in these key early months and years," added Ms. Maben. "Paid Family Leave is not a luxury for a parent, it's a biological and developmental necessity for a child. And we need to provide every opportunity for our children to succeed, as all Californians depend on our children's future prosperity to support our shared prosperity."

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About First 5 California

First 5 California, also known as the California Children and Families Commission, was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, which added a tax on tobacco products to fund education, health, childcare, and other services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. Its programs and resources are designed to educate teachers, parents, grandparents, and caregivers about the critical role they play during a child's first five years – with the overarching goal of helping more California kids grow up healthy and ready to succeed in school and in life. For more information, please visit www.cafc.ca.gov.