



# Paid Family Leave

**Presented April 27, 2016 by the Seattle Women's Commission**

Presenters:

**Morgan Beach**, Sub-committee Chair of the Economic Opportunities Committee;

**Jaron Goddard**, Co-Chair | **Nicki Olivier Hellenkamp**, Co-Chair

# Seattle Women's Commission: Who We Are

- 21 Commissioners appointed by the Mayor, City Council and the Commission
- Our Commissioners represent widely varied backgrounds:
  - Professions including small business owners, non-profit workers, engineers, attorneys, public and union employees, child care workers, medical professionals, and educators
  - Ethnic and racial minorities
  - Immigrants
  - Formerly incarcerated
  - People who have received public assistance
  - Women who identify as LGBTQ
  - And more
- Our expertise is not only in policy but bringing our experiences to inform the policies we recommend

# Paid Family Leave is Our Top Policy Priority

- Our Workplan is developed every Fall, and it is subdivided evenly across our four sub-committees.
- In 2015, we chose to specifically highlight and elevate paid family leave as our number one policy priority for two years (2015-2017).

Our goal is to advocate for and see the passage of universal paid family leave in Seattle by 2017

# Why Paid Family Leave?

Strong, significant, and measurable impacts:

- **Increase women's workforce participation and lifetime earnings:**
  - Women still have not reached full-time workforce parity with men. Among voluntary part-time workers, women are much more likely than men to report that they work part-time because of child care problems or because of other personal or family obligations.<sup>1</sup>
  - Paid maternity leave increases worker retention and reduces turnover, saving businesses significant costs associated with replacing employees.<sup>2</sup>
- **Decrease infant mortality and improve childhood developmental outcomes:**
  - Maternity leave improves child health outcomes, including increased birthweight, decreased premature births, and decreased infant mortality. Paid leave encourages men to take paternity leave and serve as caregivers, which has a number of positive effects for families and children.<sup>2</sup>

1: *The Status of Women in Washington*, Institute for Women's Policy Research & Women's Funding Alliance. February 2015.

● 2: *Paid Family and Medical Leave Factsheet*, US Department of Labor. Accessed April 2016.  
<http://www.dol.gov/wb/PaidLeave/PaidLeave.htm>

# Why Paid Family Leave?

The outcomes of Paid Family Leave affect all areas of the Women's Commission's work:

- **Economic & Educational Opportunities**
  - Fuller participation in the workforce
  - Narrowing the wage gap
- **Community Health & Wellness**
  - Maternal and infant health outcomes improve and hospital and medical costs are reduced
- **Violence Prevention & Justice**
  - Decreased occurrences reported of domestic violence
- **Equitable Development**
  - More stability for housing and decreased homelessness associated with costs of introducing an infant into the home

# Why Paid Family Leave?

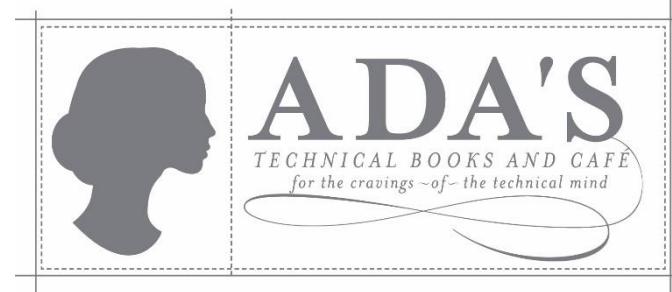
We have heard a consistent message from women all across Seattle:

- **Workers of all genders support access to paid family leave** as a universal benefit
- **Small business owners want a mechanism that allows them to provide** this benefit



Wednesday, April 1, 2015

Labor of love: pushing for progress with family leave



## ADA'S PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Posted on [August 19, 2015](#) under [Entrepreneur](#), [Work/Life](#)

AS YOU MOST LIKELY KNOW, THE US SUCKS AT PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES. WE ARE by far the worst at providing paid leave compared to other developed countries. Things are starting to change, or at least people are starting to notice, but not at a pace that works for us at Ada's. Check out this interesting video from the US

# How will this help Seattle?

- Increase competitiveness for small business
  - Small business owners in Seattle report a very competitive recruiting environment; large companies are able to offer benefits like paid family leave. By establishing a public paid family leave benefit, small businesses will improve their ability to attract top talent.<sup>3</sup>
- Nationally, fewer than 12% of workers have access to paid family leave<sup>4</sup>
  - Paid family leave is considered a “perk for the privileged”
- Key components for the most equitable paid family leave policy:
  - **Universal** to all workers regardless of gender identity
  - **Pro-rateable** for part-time and underemployed workers
  - **Portable** across jobs so that benefits are not lost when switching between employment
  - **Strong Benefit Floor:** Provides the highest % of wages possible under public system for a minimum of 12 weeks

● 3: “The State of Small Business: Washington,” *Business News Daily*. March 9, 2016.

<http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/8852-doing-business-in-washington.html>

● 4: *Paid Family and Medical Leave Factsheet*, US Department of Labor. Accessed April 2016.

<http://www.dol.gov/wb/PaidLeave/PaidLeave.htm>

# How will this help Seattle?

- Those most deeply impacted will be:
  - **Our lowest wage workers**, which have more women and more people of color than private employers who already provide paid family/parental leave
  - **Our part-time workers**, who are more often women due to caretaking responsibilities, who have no access to paid leave benefits because they are not full time employees
  - **Women** overall, who are often penalized in the workforce with lower wages, discrimination after having children and are many times forced to opt-out of the workforce

Paid Family Leave is the single most impactful and feasible policy option available to the City of Seattle to narrow the gender wage gap

# Thank you.



[www.seattle.gov/womenscommission](http://www.seattle.gov/womenscommission)

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