March On Statement on Paid Family Leave Exclusion from the Biden Agenda

Any Build Back Better plan without paid family leave is unacceptable.

Eighty-four percent of Americans support some form of paid leave. It’s no surprise that women benefit when we put children first. But paid leave isn’t just for new parents: It helps people recover from illness, care for incapacitated relatives or address a partner’s military deployment—all duties that disproportionately fall to American women.

Caregiving done by women, virtually all unpaid or underpaid, powers the American economy. After a once-in-a-century pandemic when at least 3 million women had to leave the workforce to care for children out of school or family members affected by COVID-19, we’ve seen the large-scale effects of the lack of social support many American women face when balancing family and career demands. Yet the U.S. is one of only six countries in the world with no national paid leave policy. We continue to undervalue this caregiving work when we don’t acknowledge the support American families need.

It’s disgraceful that once again a policy that would benefit women first is considered optional. We won’t be treated as a bargaining chip. When American women lose, we all lose.