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Contact: Israel Klein (JEC)
(202) 224-5171
Meghan O'Shaughnessy (Maloney)
(202) 225-7944

JEC REPORT FINDS FORTUNE 100 COMPANIES OVERWHELMINGLY OFFER 6-8 WEEKS OF PAID FAMILY LEAVE

*Maloney: Our Most Profitable Companies are a Model for a Basic Paid
Leave Standard, but Not the Gold Standard*

Washington, D.C. – The Joint Economic Committee today released a report, requested by Vice Chair Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY), finding that three-quarters of Fortune 100 companies offer mothers some form of paid leave when they have a new child, typically lasting six to eight weeks. Family leave has become an increasingly important workplace policy because most families no longer have a stay-at-home parent to provide care for a new child and they often cannot afford to take unpaid leave. As a guide for policymakers, the Joint Economic Committee examined how firms design their paid family leave policies by asking Fortune 100 companies about the length of paid leave that they provide for new parents.

“Fortune 100 companies' policies should offer a model for implementing paid family leave as a basic employment standard for all workers in our nation,” said Vice Chair Maloney. “Both Ozzie and Harriet go to work now. Families need time to care for a new child and businesses need these policies to attract and retain valuable workers. Our most profitable companies are providing a basic standard for their workers, but it’s still not the gold standard found in other industrialized countries.”

Senator Charles E. Schumer, Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, said, “In a world where two parents working is the norm, we need to do more to make sure moms and dads are given the time they need to care for their families. There's nothing more wonderful than having children, and nothing more demanding. Paid family leave policies ensure that parents can fully enjoy and tend to their growing families without having to worry about their next paycheck.”

Key findings from the JEC report, Paid Family Leave at Fortune 100 Companies: A Basic Standard, But Still Not the Gold Standard:

- Three-quarters (73.6 percent) of the Fortune 100 companies that responded offer mothers a specific paid parental leave program – such as paid family or disability leave – for the birth of a child, typically lasting six to eight weeks.

- Fathers are less likely to be offered family leave, have access to fewer weeks of paid leave, and generally use paid sick days for their leave. One-third (32.1%) of the companies report that they offer fathers paid parental leave and among those offering paid leave, the length is typically only 2 weeks.
- Nine-out-of-ten (88.7%) of the Fortune 100 firms that responded offer parents some form of paid leave when they have a new child. Many workers must cobble together leave from various programs: family leave policies, pregnancy-related disability leave, and the allowable use of paid sick days. When combining paid leave from all available sources, Fortune 100 companies typically offer mothers 12 weeks of paid leave and fathers six weeks of paid leave.
- A significant share of Fortune 100 companies (39.6%) provide employees with both paid (including leave policies, pregnancy-related disability leave, and the allowable use of paid sick days) and unpaid leave for the birth of a child. Employees in these firms typically have a total of 6 months (26 weeks) of unpaid, job-protected parental leave, on top of any paid leave they have access to.
- Roughly ten percent (11.4%) of the companies reported offering employees no paid leave of any kind.
- While Fortune 100 companies offer more leave than typically provided by other U.S. companies, the length of leave remains far below that offered in the European Union and nearly all other advanced economies.

Workers need a new set of workplace policies that allow them to meet the competing demands of work and family, the report concludes. The U.S. is the only industrialized country that does not ensure paid family leave for all workers. Fortune 100 companies' policies offer a model for implementing paid family leave in the U.S. These firms offer a basic set of leave policies which, while not as generous as in Europe, are consistent with the lengths of leave being proposed in the states and offered by Congressional offices.

Fortune 100 firms overwhelmingly offer paid leave to new mothers, in addition to paid sick days, according to the report. Employees need sick days in case they or their children get sick. Further, like the FMLA, paid family leave should allow both mothers and fathers similar lengths of time to care for and bond with a new child. While mothers need more time to recover physically from the rigors of childbirth and to breastfeed, fathers are also needed at home to help care for the new child.

The report can be found at:

<http://www.jec.senate.gov/Documents/Reports/03.05.08PaidFamilyLeave.pdf>

The Joint Economic Committee, established under the Employment Act of 1946, was created by Congress to review economic conditions and to analyze the effectiveness of economic policy.

www.jec.senate.gov

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