



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE SURVEY
- QUESTIONNAIRE -
March 2020

Fielded by: Nielsen Scarborough

Field Dates: March 5-10, 2020
March 11-25, 2020

Sample Size: March 5-10, 2020: 1,352 registered voters
March 11-25, 2020: 2,069 registered voters

Margin of Error: March 5-10, 2020: +/- 2.7%
March 11-25, 2020: +/- 2.2%

Text in **[brackets]** was not presented to respondents.

[Family and Medical Leave]

Q1. Are you currently employed?

NATIONAL	YES	NO	REFUSED / DK
March 11-25	55.3%	44.1%	0.6%
March 5-10	57.3%	42.1%	0.6%
REPUBLICANS			
March 11-25	56.2%	43.0%	0.8%
March 5-10	55.5%	44.4%	0.2%
DEMOCRATS			
March 11-25	53.1%	46.4%	0.5%
March 5-10	54.1%	45.1%	0.8%
INDEPENDENTS			
March 11-25	59.0%	41.0%	0.0%
March 5-10	69.0%	29.9%	1.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25			
Very red	54.3%	44.5%	1.2%
Red	56.7%	42.6%	0.7%
Somewhat red	55.8%	43.6%	0.5%
Somewhat blue	54.0%	45.5%	0.5%
Blue	55.0%	44.6%	0.3%
Very blue	56.0%	43.9%	0.1%

As you may know, there is currently some discussion about:

- Whether all employers should be required to allow their employees to take to take time off for family or medical reasons. (This is known as family and medical leave.)
- Whether employees should keep being paid their salaries—at least partially—while they are on leave. (When employees get some or all of their salaries paid, this is called ‘paid leave.’)

Family leave means an employee taking a certain amount of time off from work to:

- take care of a newly born or newly adopted child (this is sometimes called ‘parental leave’)
- take care of a family member—a spouse, parent, or child—who has a serious health condition

Medical leave means an employee taking a certain amount of time off to recover from a serious health condition.

A **serious health condition** means that it requires professional treatment and makes a person unable to leave the hospital or their home for a period. This is different from ordinary sick leave, when a person may take a few days day off for something like a cold.

Q2. Have you ever taken family or medical leave?

NATIONAL	YES	NO	REFUSED / DK
March 11-25	41.3%	58.1%	0.6%
March 5-10	42.9%	56.4%	0.7%
REPUBLICANS			
March 11-25	38.6%	60.6%	0.8%
March 5-10	40.2%	58.7%	1.1%
DEMOCRATS			
March 11-25	42.9%	56.7%	0.4%
March 5-10	44.0%	55.7%	0.3%
INDEPENDENTS			
March 11-25	43.7%	55.9%	0.4%
March 5-10	46.6%	52.9%	0.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25			
Very red	40.2%	59.5%	0.4%
Red	41.4%	58.5%	0.2%
Somewhat red	37.2%	62.1%	0.7%
Somewhat blue	42.8%	56.1%	1.1%
Blue	38.7%	61.0%	0.3%
Very blue	47.6%	51.6%	0.8%

Q3. As far as you know, has anybody you know ever taken family or medical leave?

NATIONAL	YES	NO	UNSURE	REFUSED / DK
March 11-25	65.4%	22.3%	12.0%	0.3%
March 5-10	66.1%	21.2%	12.2%	0.4%
REPUBLICANS				
March 11-25	63.2%	26.5%	10.0%	0.3%
March 5-10	64.5%	25.5%	9.5%	0.5%
DEMOCRATS				
March 11-25	66.5%	19.7%	13.3%	0.5%
March 5-10	68.5%	17.2%	14.0%	0.3%
INDEPENDENTS				
March 11-25	68.2%	18.5%	13.4%	0.0%
March 5-10	64.2%	21.4%	13.9%	0.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25				
Very red	66.9%	20.1%	12.6%	0.4%
Red	67.2%	21.5%	11.2%	0.1%
Somewhat red	62.2%	26.8%	10.8%	0.3%
Somewhat blue	66.9%	23.5%	9.5%	0.0%
Blue	64.4%	21.7%	13.7%	0.2%
Very blue	63.5%	20.1%	15.4%	1.0%

Here is some historical background:

In 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act was passed that requires employers to allow employees to take up to 12 weeks of family or medical leave. It does not require employers to cover any of the employee's salary, but it ensures that the employee cannot be fired as long as they had legitimate family or medical reasons for taking leave.

However, this law does not apply to 40% of workers including:

- workers in businesses that have less than 50 employees,
- workers who have worked less than one year for the employer,
- workers who work less than about 25 hours per week, or
- self-employed people

Recently, there have been some developments regarding paid family and medical leave.

In 2017, Congress passed a bill that provides financial assistance to employers who provide **paid** family and medical leave. Employers who pay at least half of the employees' wages can get assistance that covers up to a quarter of the employee's wages. This only applies to employees with salaries up to \$72,000 a year.

In 2019, Congress passed a bill that provides **paid parental leave** for all **Federal employees**, allowing Federal workers to take 12 weeks of leave to **care for a newly born, adopted, or foster child**. They receive their full salary during the period of the leave.

This has stimulated discussion on two key questions.

One key question is whether **all employers** should be required to allow **all workers** to take family and medical leave. As mentioned, about 40% of workers do not have a legal guarantee that they can take family and medical leave, meaning that they can be fired if they take time off for family or medical reasons.

Another key question is whether all workers should be **paid** some or all of their salary when they are on leave. Currently:

- about one in five workers are eligible for **paid family leave**
- about two in five workers are eligible for **paid medical leave**
- in four states, the state government offers paid family and medical leave to all workers, and the District of Columbia will be starting such a program shortly.

[Asked only if Q1 = “. . . currently employed”]

Q4. As far as you know, are you currently eligible for family leave?

NATIONAL	YES	NO	UNSURE	REFUSED / DK
March 11-25	31.8%	16.0%	7.5%	0.0%
March 5-10	32.8%	16.0%	8.4%	0.1%
REPUBLICANS				
March 11-25	30.3%	18.7%	7.2%	0.0%
March 5-10	30.1%	17.9%	7.4%	0.0%
DEMOCRATS				
March 11-25	32.5%	14.1%	6.5%	0.0%
March 5-10	31.7%	15.2%	7.2%	0.0%
INDEPENDENTS				
March 11-25	33.7%	14.3%	11.1%	0.0%
March 5-10	41.4%	13.7%	13.6%	0.4%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25				
Very red	28.5%	18.1%	7.7%	0.0%
Red	32.3%	17.1%	7.3%	0.0%
Somewhat red	33.4%	14.7%	7.7%	0.0%
Somewhat blue	33.4%	13.8%	6.9%	0.0%
Blue	31.5%	16.6%	6.9%	0.0%
Very blue	30.7%	15.5%	9.7%	0.0%

[Asked only if Q1 = “. . . currently employed”]

Q4a. As far as you know, would you receive at least some of your salary during this leave?

NATIONAL	YES	NO	UNSURE	REFUSED / DK
March 11-25	20.7%	6.6%	4.3%	0.2%
March 5-10	21.7%	6.6%	3.7%	0.7%
REPUBLICANS				
March 11-25	18.4%	7.9%	3.7%	0.3%
March 5-10	20.0%	4.7%	4.0%	1.5%
DEMOCRATS				
March 11-25	21.5%	6.1%	4.8%	0.1%
March 5-10	20.1%	8.3%	3.3%	0.0%
INDEPENDENTS				
March 11-25	24.2%	4.8%	4.7%	0.0%
March 5-10	29.5%	7.1%	4.2%	0.6%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25				
Very red	19.9%	5.2%	3.5%	0.0%
Red	21.4%	8.1%	2.9%	0.0%
Somewhat red	20.3%	9.0%	4.1%	0.0%
Somewhat blue	22.0%	4.0%	6.6%	0.8%
Blue	20.4%	6.4%	4.4%	0.4%
Very blue	19.4%	7.0%	4.3%	0.0%

[Asked only if Q1 = “. . . currently employed”]

Q5. As far as you know, are you currently eligible for medical leave?

NATIONAL	YES	NO	UNSURE	REFUSED / DK
March 11-25	32.6%	13.9%	7.0%	1.7%
March 5-10	35.7%	12.9%	7.8%	0.9%
REPUBLICANS				
March 11-25	32.3%	15.7%	7.0%	1.3%
March 5-10	34.9%	13.5%	6.1%	1.0%
DEMOCRATS				
March 11-25	32.2%	12.6%	6.1%	2.2%
March 5-10	32.3%	13.9%	6.7%	1.2%
INDEPENDENTS				
March 11-25	34.7%	13.2%	9.5%	1.7%
March 5-10	45.5%	9.3%	14.2%	0.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25				
Very red	32.1%	16.5%	4.7%	1.1%
Red	32.4%	15.9%	6.7%	1.7%
Somewhat red	35.6%	12.8%	6.1%	1.2%
Somewhat blue	32.6%	11.7%	7.6%	2.1%
Blue	31.2%	14.0%	8.6%	1.2%
Very blue	31.6%	11.1%	9.7%	3.6%

[Asked only if Q5 = “Yes” to “Currently eligible form medical leave”]

Q5a. As far as you know, would you receive at least some of your salary during this leave?

NATIONAL	YES	NO	UNSURE	REFUSED / DK
March 11-25	22.8%	6.0%	3.5%	0.3%
March 5-10	25.5%	6.3%	3.8%	0.1%
REPUBLICANS				
March 11-25	21.9%	7.5%	2.3%	0.6%
March 5-10	25.2%	5.9%	3.7%	0.1%
DEMOCRATS				
March 11-25	22.7%	5.2%	4.1%	0.1%
March 5-10	21.7%	6.9%	3.8%	0.0%
INDEPENDENTS				
March 11-25	25.1%	4.4%	4.9%	0.3%
March 5-10	35.1%	6.0%	4.1%	0.3%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25				
Very red	23.5%	4.7%	3.7%	0.2%
Red	24.9%	5.6%	1.6%	0.2%
Somewhat red	23.3%	8.6%	3.7%	0.0%
Somewhat blue	23.8%	3.9%	3.8%	1.1%
Blue	20.9%	5.6%	4.8%	0.0%
Very blue	18.5%	8.2%	4.5%	0.5%

[Paid Family and Medical Leave]

Currently, there is a proposal in Congress that would extend paid family and medical leave to more workers. Here is what is being proposed.

- **All workers** would be allowed to take 12 weeks of family or medical leave. This would apply no matter the size of the company, how long they have been working there, or how many hours a week they work. The employer would not be legally allowed to fire those workers, if they took leave for valid family or medical reasons.
- To have this leave be paid, workers would submit an application to the government, and it must be determined that their reason for taking leave is valid.
- Workers on leave would be eligible to receive two thirds of their wages for 12 weeks, up to a maximum of \$4,000 a month.
- These benefits would be paid from a Federal government Trust Fund. The government estimates that to fully fund this program would require a new payroll tax of 0.62% of employees' salaries with:
 - 0.31% paid by the employee (that would be \$155 a year for someone with a salary of \$50,000)
 - 0.31% paid by the employer
 - self-employed workers paying the full 0.62%.

Here are two arguments in favor of this proposal:

Q6. Clearly, people need to be able to take leave to take care of a new or newly adopted child. If there is no program for covering at least a part of their salaries, many will simply not be able to afford it. Extensive research shows that the bonds that form between newborn children and their parents in the first weeks of life have a critical effect on the child's healthy development. Failing to provide every child with this care not only hurts the child but leads to greater costs to society as such children are more likely to grow up and have various social and health problems. Every child deserves to get this care independent of its parents' income.

How convincing or unconvincing do you find this argument?

NATIONAL	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total Convincing	Somewhat Unconvincing	Very Unconvincing	Total Unconvincing	Refused / DK
March 11-25	41.2%	41.3%	82.5%	10.8%	6.5%	17.3%	0.3%
March 5-10	38.5%	38.7%	77.2%	13.7%	7.9%	21.6%	1.2%
REPUBLICANS							
March 11-25	27.0%	43.9%	70.9%	18.0%	11.0%	29.0%	0.2%
March 5-10	23.4%	41.3%	64.7%	20.0%	13.9%	33.9%	1.4%
DEMOCRATS							
March 11-25	52.8%	39.0%	91.8%	5.3%	2.7%	8.0%	0.2%
March 5-10	51.1%	36.6%	87.7%	8.1%	3.2%	11.3%	1.0%
INDEPENDENTS							
March 11-25	45.2%	40.9%	86.1%	7.6%	5.6%	13.2%	0.6%
March 5-10	42.2%	37.7%	79.9%	13.4%	5.6%	19.0%	1.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25							
Very red	38.3%	41.1%	79.4%	13.1%	6.8%	19.9%	0.8%
Red	39.5%	40.5%	80.0%	12.8%	7.0%	19.8%	0.2%
Somewhat red	40.9%	42.6%	83.5%	9.3%	7.2%	16.5%	0.0%
Somewhat blue	40.5%	42.8%	83.3%	8.5%	7.9%	16.4%	0.2%
Blue	43.3%	39.3%	82.6%	11.5%	5.7%	17.2%	0.3%
Very blue	46.8%	41.6%	88.4%	7.4%	4.2%	11.6%	0.0%

Q7. The whole idea of this plan is that if every employee and employer pitched in just a tiny bit each month, we could have a safety net to help everybody when they or their family member have health problems. Unexpected illnesses happen and people will exhaust their ordinary sick leave. While some companies do provide such medical leave, many do not. There needs to be a system in place so that they can recover from their illness and not completely lose their savings or go into debt. Four in ten American adults have so little in savings that they would not be able to cover a \$400 emergency expense. And, it is those lowest income Americans that are least likely to have access to paid leave - around 5 times less likely than those with the highest incomes. People should also be able to care for a sick family member.

How convincing or unconvincing do you find this argument?

NATIONAL	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total Convincing	Somewhat Unconvincing	Very Unconvincing	Total Unconvincing	Refused / DK
March 11-25	42.4%	39.7%	82.1%	10.5%	6.9%	17.4%	0.5%
March 5-10	39.0%	40.1%	79.1%	12.9%	7.6%	20.5%	0.4%
REPUBLICANS							
March 11-25	26.5%	44.7%	71.2%	16.9%	11.6%	28.5%	0.3%
March 5-10	22.7%	43.8%	66.5%	20.6%	12.7%	33.3%	0.2%
DEMOCRATS							
March 11-25	56.5%	36.9%	93.4%	3.5%	2.5%	6.0%	0.6%
March 5-10	53.6%	37.3%	90.9%	5.2%	3.6%	8.8%	0.2%
INDEPENDENTS							
March 11-25	44.4%	34.8%	79.2%	13.4%	6.9%	20.3%	0.6%
March 5-10	40.2%	38.3%	78.5%	14.3%	6.1%	20.4%	1.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25							
Very red	41.2%	38.0%	79.2%	13.8%	6.6%	20.4%	0.5%
Red	41.5%	39.1%	80.6%	11.1%	8.1%	19.2%	0.2%
Somewhat red	42.5%	36.9%	79.4%	12.3%	7.6%	19.9%	0.7%
Somewhat blue	36.7%	46.5%	83.2%	8.4%	8.2%	16.6%	0.2%
Blue	44.2%	38.9%	83.1%	10.3%	6.7%	17.0%	0.0%
Very blue	51.1%	37.9%	89.0%	6.3%	3.2%	9.5%	1.5%

Here are two arguments against this proposal:

Q8. Let's be clear about this plan—it is a tax that would mean lower take home pay for workers. Employers are taxed too so they are going to have to get the money from somewhere and they are most likely to cut back on pay raises or to cut other benefits—which will hurt workers. These taxes on workers are especially hard on low-income people who are living on the edge. Furthermore, because the benefits are just two thirds of a person's income, people with lower incomes will get smaller benefits and the amount will not be enough for them to make ends meet. So many of them will not end up taking the leave, though they still have to pay the tax.

NATIONAL	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total Convincing	Somewhat Unconvincing	Very Unconvincing	Total Unconvincing	Refused / DK
March 11-25	23.8%	40.7%	64.5%	23.9%	10.8%	34.7%	0.8%
March 5-10	24.9%	40.7%	65.6%	24.3%	9.2%	33.5%	0.9%
REPUBLICANS							
March 11-25	27.3%	45.8%	73.1%	18.3%	7.7%	26.0%	0.8%
March 5-10	33.0%	42.7%	75.7%	18.1%	5.1%	23.2%	1.1%
DEMOCRATS							
March 11-25	19.5%	34.7%	54.2%	30.1%	14.9%	45.0%	0.7%
March 5-10	19.1%	39.8%	58.9%	28.5%	11.9%	40.4%	0.7%
INDEPENDENTS							
March 11-25	26.7%	43.6%	70.3%	21.3%	7.6%	28.9%	0.8%
March 5-10	21.0%	38.1%	59.1%	27.9%	11.8%	39.7%	1.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25							
Very red	24.9%	42.7%	67.6%	22.9%	9.2%	32.1%	0.3%
Red	24.1%	40.3%	64.4%	23.4%	11.6%	35.0%	0.5%
Somewhat red	24.0%	39.5%	63.5%	24.6%	10.7%	35.3%	1.2%
Somewhat blue	21.6%	41.6%	63.2%	22.2%	13.8%	36.0%	0.8%
Blue	23.5%	42.2%	65.7%	24.2%	9.0%	33.2%	1.1%
Very blue	25.3%	37.7%	63.0%	27.3%	9.4%	36.7%	0.3%

Q9. America does not need another middle-class entitlement program that is inefficient and wasteful. It is really better for private employers to offer their own leave programs rather than having a one-size fits all government program. Whereas employers can provide flexible policies, government programs are rigid, burdensome, and impersonal. Many workers would prefer to request paid time off directly from their employer, rather than deal with the government, which would require obtaining medical records, filing a bunch of paperwork, and waiting weeks or more to see if they are eligible for benefits. We should look to private employers to set up programs to help their workers set aside some of their wages so that they can cover the cost of leave should they need it.

NATIONAL	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total Convincing	Somewhat Unconvincing	Very Unconvincing	Total Unconvincing	Refused / DK
March 11-25	28.8%	32.7%	61.5%	19.5%	18.0%	37.5%	1.0%
March 5-10	31.9%	32.7%	64.6%	18.4%	16.1%	34.5%	0.9%
REPUBLICANS							
March 11-25	40.8%	34.4%	75.2%	16.9%	6.3%	23.2%	1.6%
March 5-10	49.0%	32.3%	81.3%	11.8%	5.9%	17.7%	1.0%
DEMOCRATS							
March 11-25	16.6%	28.7%	45.3%	23.2%	30.9%	54.1%	0.7%
March 5-10	18.3%	31.2%	49.5%	23.2%	26.7%	49.9%	0.6%
INDEPENDENTS							
March 11-25	31.7%	39.2%	70.9%	16.0%	12.8%	28.8%	0.2%
March 5-10	26.1%	37.1%	63.2%	21.9%	13.6%	35.5%	1.3%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25							
Very red	33.1%	33.8%	66.9%	14.9%	17.5%	32.4%	0.8%
Red	32.7%	30.2%	62.9%	19.5%	17.0%	36.5%	0.6%
Somewhat red	28.4%	29.9%	58.3%	24.8%	15.8%	40.6%	1.2%
Somewhat blue	25.0%	38.3%	63.3%	17.3%	18.0%	35.3%	1.4%
Blue	29.6%	30.0%	59.6%	18.8%	19.9%	38.7%	1.6%
Very blue	22.6%	34.7%	57.3%	21.9%	20.4%	42.3%	0.4%

Q10. Now, here again is the proposal:

- **All workers** would be allowed to take 12 weeks of family or medical leave. This would apply no matter the size of the company, how long they have been working there, or how many hours a week they work. The employer would not be legally allowed to fire those workers, if they took leave for valid family or medical reasons.
- To have this leave be paid, workers would submit an application to the government, and it must be determined that their reason for taking leave is valid.
- Workers on leave would be eligible to receive two thirds of their wages for 12 weeks, up to a maximum of \$4,000 a month.
- These benefits would be paid from a Federal government Trust Fund. The government estimates that to fully fund this program would require a new payroll tax of 0.62% of employees' salaries with:
 - 0.31% paid by the employee (that would be \$155 a year for someone with a salary of \$50,000)
 - 0.31% paid by the employer
 - self-employed workers paying the full 0.62%.

NATIONAL	Mean	0-4	5	6-10	Refused / DK
March 11-25	5.5	41.6%	13.2%	44.8%	0.4%
March 5-10	5.3	47.2%	14.9%	37.3%	0.6%
REPUBLICANS					
March 11-25	4.4	54.1%	13.3%	32.1%	0.5%
March 5-10	3.9	63.9%	15.1%	20.4%	0.6%
DEMOCRATS					
March 11-25	6.6	28.2%	12.8%	58.7%	0.4%
March 5-10	6.7	30.1%	14.8%	54.5%	0.6%
INDEPENDENTS					
March 11-25	5.3	46.0%	13.9%	39.6%	0.4%
March 5-10	5.0	50.8%	15.0%	33.7%	0.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25					
Very red	4.9	46.1%	14.5%	39.2%	0.2%
Red	5.2	40.2%	13.1%	46.7%	0.0%
Somewhat red	5.7	40.9%	12.7%	45.7%	0.7%
Somewhat blue	5.6	38.4%	12.7%	48.6%	0.2%
Blue	6.0	45.6%	11.2%	42.1%	1.0%
Very blue	6.0	38.6%	14.9%	45.8%	0.7%

Q11. So, in conclusion, do you favor or oppose this proposal for paid family and medical leave?

NATIONAL	FAVOR	OPPOSE	REFUSED / DK
March 11-25	67.4%	31.7%	0.9%
March 5-10	61.2%	38.6%	0.2%
REPUBLICANS			
March 11-25	48.1%	50.5%	1.4%
March 5-10	37.8%	62.2%	0.0%
DEMOCRATS			
March 11-25	86.1%	13.6%	0.3%
March 5-10	82.7%	17.1%	0.2%
INDEPENDENTS			
March 11-25	65.5%	33.3%	1.2%
March 5-10	62.0%	37.5%	0.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25			
Very red	61.1%	37.2%	1.7%
Red	65.1%	33.4%	1.5%
Somewhat red	64.7%	34.8%	0.5%
Somewhat blue	74.9%	24.9%	0.2%
Blue	66.7%	32.8%	0.6%
Very blue	73.4%	26.1%	0.5%

[Asked only if Q11 = “oppose” or skipped the question]

Q11a. What if the proposal were to require all employers to provide all employees 12 weeks of family and medical leave, but the government would not provide paid family and medical leave and, thus, there would not be a new tax. The employer would decide whether or not to pay some or all of the employee’s salary during the period of leave.

Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

NATIONAL	FAVOR	OPPOSE	REFUSED / DK
March 11-25	19.7%	12.4%	0.5%
March 5-10	24.4%	14.2%	0.2%
REPUBLICANS			
March 11-25	31.1%	19.8%	1.0%
March 5-10	39.2%	22.8%	0.2%
DEMOCRATS			
March 11-25	9.1%	4.7%	0.1%
March 5-10	11.7%	5.6%	0.0%
INDEPENDENTS			
March 11-25	19.6%	14.6%	0.3%
March 5-10	21.6%	15.5%	0.9%
Cook's PVI (D-R) – March 11-25			
Very red	24.7%	13.9%	0.2%
Red	21.2%	12.2%	1.5%
Somewhat red	20.2%	15.2%	0.0%
Somewhat blue	15.9%	9.2%	0.0%
Blue	19.0%	13.5%	0.9%
Very blue	16.0%	10.4%	0.1%

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