



Middle School Model Congress 2016

House Oversight and Government Reform

Chairs: Olivia McKenzie & Julian Kraidelman



Topic One Brief

Maternity leave is the period of time that women take off from work before and after they give birth. **Paternity leave** can be defined as the period of time the father of the child takes off from work to care for their newborn baby, or the time period parents take off when they go through the adoption process. Current United States maternity leave policy is directed by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. The FMLA requires employers to provide employees 12 job-protected, unpaid workweeks off in a year for the birth or adoption of a child. Additionally, the worker seeking maternity leave must work for an employer that employs more than 50 employees and must have worked for their employer for at least a year. However, some states and companies in the US have instituted their own laws providing paid or extended paternity and maternity leaves. California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island are the only states that have paid maternity leave laws, and tech giants Google, Apple, and Netflix offer generous maternity leaves as well. The US is the one of last developed country to institute paid maternity leave, third to Papua New Guinea and Oman. Both the Democratic and Republican parties have advocated for the United States to guarantee paid maternity leave.

Supporters of a paid maternity leave in the US argue that our current US policies on maternity leave contribute to the wage and income gaps between men and women because they put women who want to be mothers at a disadvantage, that the requirements of the FMLA exclude many workers, and that it is best for the health and wellbeing of the mothers and their children to have a longer, paid period of time. Those who are against a paid maternity leave will argue that paid maternity leave is a burden for employers and that becoming a parent is a choice, so those who choose to become parents should have to deal with the sacrifices.

This bill will guarantee a **paid** maternity and paternity leave for *both* parents of either a newborn child or the adoption of a child. Additionally, the leave will be 200 days, a little more than 6 months (compared to the 12 weeks of the FMLA).

Questions to Consider:

- How will this bill affect single parent households, same-sex couples, or other non-traditional families?
- Will this bill have any effects on employers?
- Will this bill affect the economy in any way?
- How does this bill change the reality of mothers, or any parents, in the workplace?

Here are some sources to guide you on your research:

<http://www.debate.org/opinions/should-women-be-guaranteed-paid-maternity-leave>

<http://www.techrepublic.com/article/10-things-you-need-to-know-about-maternity-leave-in-the-us/>

<http://www.nbc-2.com/story/30479554/pros-and-cons-of-paid-parental-leave>

<http://kandktechnical.com/the-economics-of-paid-parental-leave/>

<http://time.com/money/3985632/netflix-unlimited-parental-leave/>

Please, feel free to email me with any questions you may have!

Omckenzie23@gmail.com

MIDDLE SCHOOL MODEL CONGRESS

House Oversight and Government Reform Principal Authors: Olivia McKenzie

Bill No: 1

Co-Authors: Julian Kraidelman

Title of Bill: An Act to Enforce Sufficient Maternity and Paternity Leave in Order to Protect Employees

1 *Whereas* under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), it is federal law for
2 employers to provide employees a maximum twelve week, unpaid leave for
3 qualified medical and family reasons, including adoption and pregnancy; *Whereas*
4 more than 40% of US workers do not meet all of FMLA’s requirements; *Whereas*
5 complications during pregnancy cost more and require more time to receive proper
6 medical care; *Whereas* many employees who do meet FLMA requirements don’t
7 take leave because they cannot afford it; *Whereas* pregnancy is physically strenuous
8 and it is important that women have enough time and money to properly care for
9 themselves during this time; *Whereas* medical costs and subsistence costs when you
10 are pregnant and after you have a child are extremely expensive, so employees who
11 are expecting a child need the money they would’ve earned if they were physically
12 able to work; *Whereas* twelve weeks is not a sufficient time period to properly take
13 care of themselves and their newborn; *Whereas* in Sweden, both parents are entitled
14 to 480 days of paid maternity and paternity leave for pregnancy or adoption, which
15 allows both parents to properly prepare for the arrival of their child and to properly
16 pay for expenses associated with childcare; *Whereas* the US is the only developed
17 economy without a paid maternity leave; *Whereas* research from the Centers for
18 Disease Control and Prevention concludes that a shorter, unpaid maternity leave is
19 more likely to result in postpartum depression, and lower rates of childhood
20 immunization and breastfeeding; *Whereas* not providing paid maternity and
21 paternity leave for a sufficient time period is discriminating against families.

22

23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE MIDDLE SCHOOL MODEL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED

24

25 **Section 1:** All employers in the United States of America must provide eligible
26 employees a 200-day, job-protected paid maternity and paternity leave for adoption
27 and pregnancy for both parents.

28 a. Employees must be paid a minimum of 75% of their normal salary during
29 their leave.

30 b.

31 **Section 2:** Employees must give notice to their employer 30 days prior to taking
32 their leave.

33

34 **Section 3:** This bill will be enacted 91 days after its passing.

Topic #2 Brief: Police Brutality and Reform

Over the past few years police brutality across the country has surfaced as a major issue of domestic violence. There have been over 700-800 people shot and killed by the police the past year and over 1,000 people killed in 2015. While the majority of the people killed this year were African Americans, in 2015, there were twice as many white people killed as African Americans. No matter what race or appearance someone has, police shootings of non-threatening civilians needs to ultimately come to an end. Police shootings have not just recently been a pressing domestic issue, but furthermore, the limited to no legal action taken against guilty police officers despite clear video evidence proving them guilty. This year, no officer has been given jail time for their actions. Keep in mind that there needs to be unified action between the two sides to achieve domestic peace. Now it's up to you to decide what actions to take in hope of achieving domestic peace between communities and police officers.

Questions to Consider:

- The hiring standard battle ranges in many agencies. On the one hand, pressure exists to meet the staffing shortfalls by making it easier to gain entry into the profession. The flip side encompasses those that believe it is better to hire only those that meet long-established criteria for properly trained officers. Which model do you think our government should enforce and why?
- How much responsibility does an officer have for killing a civilian if he or she feels threatened for his/her own life?
- Video evidence for civilian-civilian murders is often enough evidence to be found guilty. Why are officers being let go on paid-leave when there is clear video evidence showing they killed a harmless civilian? What can we do about this?
- Will de-escalation courses and anti-profiling be suffice to end police brutality?
- What other approaches/enforcements can we take as members of Congress to decrease police brutality?
- What consequences should be faced for an officer found guilty of not following procedure for the usage of lethal weapons if any at all?

Helpful links:

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/thinkprogress.org/amp/p/7f1aec6b7098?client=safari>
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/police-shootings-2016/>
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2016/07/11/arent-more-white-peoplethan-black-people-killed-by-police-yes-but-no/?utm_term=.e7e7520074fc
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/national/2015/08/08/black-and-unarmed/>

MIDDLE SCHOOL MODEL CONGRESS

House Oversight and Government Reform Principal Authors: Julian Kraidelman

Bill No: 2

Co-Authors: Olivia McKenzie

Title of Bill: An Act to Formally Reform Police Academies

1 *Whereas* there have been 761 people killed by the police in 2016; *Whereas* video
2 evidence proves that multiple police shootings have been unjust and overly brutal;
3 *Whereas* police training techniques have proven to be ineffectual; *Whereas* police
4 academy jobs are too easily handed out due to hiring quotas resulting in unqualified
5 police officers; *Whereas* the state government has been ineffective in regulating police
6 reform so federal aid is needed; *Whereas* the racial injustice towards minorities needs to
7 come to a halt in order to avoid domestic upheaval; *Whereas* the police brutality in
8 America needs to come to an immediate halt for the prosperity of all.

9

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE MIDDLE SCHOOL MODEL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED

11

12 **Section 1:** Mandating the House of Oversight and Government Reform to create new and
13 improved hiring requirements and training policies for police academies to lower the rate
14 of civilian casualties such as:

- 15 a. A minimum of forty college credits.
16 b. A mandatory de-escalation and anti-profiling course taken by all officers to prevent
17 unnecessary brutality, courses created by the federal government.
18 c. A minimum of 40 hours of community service monthly to improve communal
19 relations.
20 d. Immediate layoff of officers who deem unfit for fieldwork, enforced by government
21 officials.
22 e. Officers are no longer allowed to carry lethal weapons.

23

24 **Section 2:** Mandating the House of Oversight and Government Reform enact immediate
25 termination of any officer who is caught profiling through cop-cam evidence.
26 Government officials will review video evidence and officers will stand trial for their acts
27 of continuous profiling.

28

29 **Section 3:** In a case of civilian death by police found unjust by a jury or judge the
30 minimum sentence will be a life sentence in prison or the death penalty if constituted by
31 the state government where the crime was committed.

32

33

34 **Section 4:** Any case of a local police department disregarding the terms and of this bill will result in the immediate closure of said police department. S.W.A.T. will temporarily replace said department until a renewed police department is created.

Section 5: This bill will take effect 91 days after its passing.