

[Paid Family Leave Is Critical to Breastfeeding Success](#)



Written by [Laurel Haring](#) Saturday, March 08 2008 08:29

[Mom Topics - Breastfeeding](#)

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Today, on International Women's Day, the nonprofit, nonpartisan group [MomsRising](#) is encouraging all moms -- and dads -- to tell the leading presidential candidates that moms in America need paid family leave. A nursing mother shouldn't have to work long hours, feel pressured to get back to work quickly, or wonder how to make ends meet if she doesn't return to work quickly because she has no paid time off. Those early early days with a newborn are critical to successful breastfeeding.

The following information is taken both from the [MomsRising](#) Web site and from its email about the need for a national paid family leave policy.

[The MomsRising Organization](#)

MomsRising is working to bring together millions of people who share a common concern about the need to build a more family-friendly America. Started in May of 2006, MomsRising has gained over 140,000 citizen members and is rapidly growing. More than 85 national and state organizations have signed on to be aligned with MomsRising.

Our members are bringing important motherhood and family issues to the forefront of the country's awareness. We are working to create both cultural and legislative change. It is time to break the logjam that has been holding back family-friendly legislation for decades and to advance workplace policies that will support families.

MomsRising offers easy entry into citizen advocacy and is bringing the power of online organizing to motherhood and family issues.

The MomsRising Email

Did you know it takes eight to 10 hours per day to breastfeed a newborn?[1] How can a mother be successful in those early make-or-break days if she's working long hours, feeling pressured to get back to work quickly, or wondering how to make ends meet if she doesn't return fast because she has no paid time off?

The presidential candidates talk about bringing new ideas and leadership to this country. Some of them even have plans in place to enact paid family leave, but none of those promises will become *policy* unless the candidates know that moms are paying attention - and what we want is action.

[Tell the leading presidential candidates that moms in America need paid family leave .](#)

According to a new study just released by the U.S. Census Bureau[2], 49% of American mothers cobble together some sort of paid leave following childbirth by using a combination of sick days, vacation days, disability leave, and employer-provided maternity leave. A full 51% of new mothers lack any paid leave, so some take unpaid leave, some quit, some even lose their jobs.

A joint Harvard and McGill University study of over 170 countries found that the U.S. is one of only four countries that doesn't have any paid leave for new mothers.[3] This is a national disgrace.

The next president has a chance to right this wrong. But we need to get on their radar now, while they are courting the "mom" vote. [Send an email to the presidential candidates](#) asking them, upon taking office, to make it a priority to pass national paid family leave.

Please pass along this information to other moms, dads, and grandparents who want to see a more family-friendly America. We appreciate it and so do our babies!

-- The MomsRising Team

[1] The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, by the La Leche League, contains a treasure trove of advice for new moms.

[2] U.S. Census Bureau, Maternity Leave and Employment Patterns: 1961-2003

[3] For example, mothers in France get 10 weeks and mothers in Germany get 14 weeks of fully paid leave. Take a look at [this](#). See also: "[The Work, Family, and Equity Index: How Does the U.S. Measure Up](#)," by Jody Heyman, Allison Earle, and Jeffrey Hayes, and "[More Moms Take Paid Leave](#)," by Cheryl Wetzstein, The Washington Times, February 26, 2008.

About the Author

Laurel Haring is a writer. She lives with her family in Wilmington, Delaware, and posts semi-regularly to her blog, [Let Me Say This About That](#).

<http://www.typeamom.net/paid-family-leave-is-critical-to-breastfeeding-success.html>