

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 306

Recognizing that the United States needs to support and empower mothers in the workforce by investing in the Mom Economy.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 20, 2023

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

RESOLUTION

Recognizing that the United States needs to support and empower mothers in the workforce by investing in the Mom Economy.

Whereas mothers are an essential part of the workforce and economy of the United States;

Whereas 2,500,000 women left the workforce in the first year of the COVID–19 pandemic, as compared to 1,800,000 men, largely as a result of the burdens of childcare, work, and remote learning;

Whereas maternal employment fell by 15.7 percent as a result of the COVID–19 pandemic, as compared to paternal employment, which fell by 9.6 percent in the same time period;

Whereas at least $\frac{4}{10}$ of women report having experienced gender discrimination at work;

Whereas, on average, women are paid 77 cents for every dollar paid to men;

Whereas Black women, Latinas, Native women, and many communities of Asian-American and Pacific-Islander women experience higher poverty rates and higher wage gaps compared to White, non-Hispanic men;

Whereas women occupy close to $\frac{2}{3}$ of jobs that pay the Federal minimum wage or just a few dollars above it;

Whereas even 1 percent of mothers leaving the workforce would result in an estimated \$8,700,000,000 economic fallout for families;

Whereas strong investments in childcare are essential for the full employment of women, and the gross domestic product of the United States would increase by 10 to 15 basis points with such investments;

Whereas $\frac{1}{2}$ of the families in the United States with children under the age of 18 years have a mother who contributes at least 40 percent of household earnings;

Whereas mothers of color play a vital role in the financial stability of their families, with 79 percent of Black mothers, 64 percent of Native American mothers, 49 percent of Latina mothers, and 43 percent of Asian-American and Pacific-Islander mothers serving as breadwinners;

Whereas, in addition to the economic security that mothers provide for their families, mothers are more than 3 times as likely as fathers to be responsible for most of the housework and caregiving in their households;

Whereas, in addition to caregiving for children, mothers disproportionately shoulder unpaid caregiving responsibilities for older relatives and other family members with disabilities;

Whereas women are twice as likely as men to say that taking time off had a negative impact on their professional development;

Whereas industries dominated by women disproportionately fail to provide family-friendly workplace benefits such as paid family and medical leave, health insurance, and retirement plans;

Whereas 44 percent of workers are not eligible for unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.);

Whereas 3 of 10 women without access to paid leave exit the workforce after giving birth;

Whereas paid leave policies can reduce the number of women leaving their jobs by 20 percent during the first year after welcoming a child and up to 50 percent after 5 years;

Whereas mothers sometimes find childcare costs are almost as much as their paychecks, creating a financial incentive for mothers to leave the workforce in exchange for childcare duties;

Whereas 40 percent of parents have gone into debt due to the high costs of childcare;

Whereas the childcare crisis costs the United States \$122,000,000,000 each year, including \$78,000,000,000 in lost earnings and job search expenses,

\$23,000,000,000 in lost workforce productivity, and \$21,000,000,000 in lost tax revenue;

Whereas a significant investment in childcare is simultaneously job creating and job enabling, creating good jobs and supporting parental employment;

Whereas, by encouraging women to remain in the workforce full time, access to paid leave and childcare significantly boosts mothers' lifetime earning potential;

Whereas the 2021 temporary expansion of the child tax credit lifted 3,700,000 children out of poverty;

Whereas families used the child tax credit to cover routine expenses, improve nutrition, decrease reliance on credit cards and other high-risk financial services, and make long-term educational investments; and

Whereas families of color saw the largest quality of life improvements due to the expansion of the child tax credit in 2021: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) the United States needs to prioritize a Mom
3 Economy that invests in the caregiving infrastruc-
4 ture required to adequately support and empower
5 mothers in the workforce and sustain a thriving
6 economy;

7 (2) mothers, especially mothers of color, face
8 systemic economic and social inequalities that re-
9 strict their ability to balance parenting responsibil-
10 ities with workplace roles and limit their professional
11 advancement;

1 (3) mothers play an integral role not only in the
2 financial well-being of their families but in the pro-
3 ductivity of the American economy as a whole;

4 (4) the United States should invest in its moth-
5 ers by expanding and developing the social safety net
6 in order to secure meaningful and sustainable eco-
7 nomic growth, including—

8 (A) robust paid family and medical leave
9 plans for all workers, including—

10 (i) paid parental leave following the
11 birth of a child or the placement of a child
12 for adoption or foster care, provided in
13 equal amounts for all parents regardless of
14 gender; and

15 (ii) paid leave policies that can be
16 used for family caregiving and workers'
17 own medical leave;

18 (B) paid menstrual leave and remote work
19 accommodations for workers experiencing de-
20 bilitating menstrual or menopause symptoms;

21 (C) investment in the childcare industry
22 with the goal of providing universal childcare
23 and early learning, including—

24 (i) robust funding for Head Start and
25 Early Head Start programs;

1 (ii) Federal financial support for
2 childcare programs to guarantee all fami-
3 lies have access to affordable and high
4 quality child care; and

5 (iii) commitments to pay childcare
6 workers a dignified, living wage;

7 (D) access to nutritious food as a human
8 right, including through—

9 (i) boosting SNAP maximum and
10 minimum benefits and removing barriers to
11 access, including time restrictions and ad-
12 ditional work requirements; and

13 (ii) increasing funds for school meals
14 and other nutrition programs to combat
15 child hunger and making school meals
16 more accessible;

17 (E) the implementation and expansion of
18 child poverty reduction tools that improve in-
19 come security, infant and maternal health, and
20 educational and economic outcomes into the
21 second generation, including—

22 (i) a permanent expansion of the child
23 tax credit; and

24 (ii) improvements in the earned in-
25 come tax credit, which lifts millions of peo-

1 ple above the poverty line each year and
2 boosts labor force participation among sin-
3 gle mothers;

4 (F) addressing the Nation’s maternal mor-
5 tality crisis through critical investments in ma-
6 ternal health care, including ensuring access to
7 the full range of reproductive health care and
8 family planning;

9 (G) raising the Federal minimum wage for
10 all workers, including tipped workers, and ad-
11 justing it on a yearly basis to keep pace with
12 inflation; and

13 (H) investments in legislation that ensures
14 protections for LGBTQ+ mothers in the work-
15 place, such as the Equality Act, and reduces
16 wage discrimination, such as the Paycheck
17 Fairness Act; and

18 (5) United States policymakers should include a
19 specific focus on working mothers in future policy-
20 making, beyond the aforementioned policies, includ-
21 ing with regard to economic policy, fiscal policy, and
22 social safety net policy, in order to ensure that work-
23 ing mothers and other caregivers can continue to
24 balance their roles as family anchors and caregivers

- 1 with their work and economic contributions to both
- 2 their families and the economy of the United States.

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