

**Greater North Dakota Chamber
HB 1441
House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee
February 3, 2021**

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee, my name is Matt Gardner, Director of Government affairs for the Greater North Dakota Chamber (GNDC). GNDC is North Dakota's largest statewide business advocacy organization. We stand in opposition to HB 1441.

HB 1484 raises the fundamental question of whether the government should establish a paid family leave mandate for business or if the private market can be responsive to the benefits sought by North Dakota's workforce?

According to the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), Pew Research polling, and the National Survey of Working Mothers, more than 60 percent of mothers or workers have access to paid leave. Other government surveys estimate that the number is between 45 and 57 percent, much higher than the Bureau Labor and Statistics figure commonly used by proponents of government-mandated paid family leave, which does not include all paid leave options.

Over 100 large companies have created or expanded paid family leave policies over the last five years. Major companies, including Walmart, Walgreens, Home Depot, Target, Starbucks, Amazon, FedEx, and McDonald's have created, or expanded paid leave programs since late 2017, with expansions applying to low-wage or hourly workers, not just high-wage workers. Even small employers such as GNDC offer paid family leave.

As a backstop, the Family Medical Leave Act provides job protection and health insurance coverage as if the employee had not taken leave.

Make no mistake, the private sector has grown its paid leave offerings in response to employee demands and in competition. A government mandate has not been needed and is not needed to force companies to compete for workers through a combination of wages and benefits.

In fact, wage restructuring and redistributive effects that happen as a result of government mandates may actually have a detrimental effect on employee benefits.

I urge a "Do Not Pass" recommendation on HB 1441 and I'll stand for any questions.

Estimates of access to paid leave.

Source	Paid leave figure	Details
National Survey of Working Mothers	63% of employed mothers said their employer provided paid maternity leave benefits	2013 survey
Pew Research	63% of “Americans who took time off from work in the past two years for parental, family, or medical reasons report that they received at least some pay during this time.”	2017
Census Bureau’s Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)	50.8% of working mothers report using paid leave of some kind before or after childbirth, and 60.3% of working mothers report using paid leave and/or disability before or after birth	2006–2008 data
Family and Medical Leave Act Work-site and Employee Surveys	57% of women and 55% of men received pay for parental leave from any source	2012 data
Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey (CPS)	Dating back to 1994, on average 45% of working women who took parental leave received some pay	1994–2014 data
U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics	15% of civilian workers report access to paid family leave, when the definition of paid leave is narrowly defined	March 2017

Source: Barbara Gault et al., “Figure 1: Paid Parental/Family Leave Access and Usage Statistics from Five Federal Key Data Sources,” in “Paid Parental Leave in the United States: What the Data Tell Us about Access, Usage, and Economic and Health Benefits,” Institute for Women’s Policy Research, U.S. Department of Labor, March 2014, https://www.dol.gov/wb/resources/paid_parental_leave_in_the_united_states.pdf; Eugene R. Declercq et al., “Listening to Mothers III: New Mothers Speak Out,” New York: Childbirth Connection, June 2013, <http://Transform.childbirthconnection.org/reports/listeningtomothers/>; Renee Stepler, “Key Takeaways on Americans’ Views of and Experiences with Family and Medical Leave,” Pew Research Center, March 23, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/23/key-takeaways-on-americans-views-of-and-experiences-with-family-and-medical-leave/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), “Employee Benefits Survey,” March 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2017/ownership/civilian/table32a.htm>; and BLS, “National Compensation Survey: Glossary of Employee Benefit Terms,” April 11, 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/glossary20162017.htm>.