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UC Berkeley Study: Research Shows Unions Have a Positive Impact on Family-Friendly Workplace Policies

As Congress prepares to debate the Employee Free Choice Act, report finds that families benefit from unionization.

Berkeley, CA – Unions have a positive impact on family-friendly workplace policies like paid family leave, paid sick days, family health insurance, and child-care benefits, according to a new report released today by the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education and the Labor Project for Working Families.

“As more Americans are struggling to raise and care for their families at the same time they’re holding down a job, workplace policies that facilitate a work-family balance are becoming increasingly important. We looked at whether unions make a difference for these families, and it turns out that unionization has a positive impact on key family-friendly policies like family health insurance, paid family leave, and child-care benefits,” said Jenifer MacGillvary of the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education, a co-author of the new report, **Family-Friendly Workplaces: Do Unions Make a Difference?**

According to the UC Berkeley report, evidence from the research literature on family-friendly workplaces suggests:

*Unionization promotes compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act. Unionized employees are more likely to have heard of the Family and Medical Leave Act, have fewer worries about taking leave, and are more likely to receive fully paid and partially paid leaves.

*Comparing hourly workers who take family and medical leave, 46 percent of unionized workers compared to 29 percent of nonunionized workers receive full pay while on leave.

*Unionized workers are 1.3 times as likely as nonunionized workers to be allowed to use their own sick time to care for a sick child, and they are 50 percent more likely than nonunionized workers to have paid personal leave that can be used to care for sick children.

*Companies with 30 percent or more unionized workers are five times as likely as companies with no unionized workers to pay the entire family health insurance premium. Even when unionized employees are required to pay part of their family insurance premium, they pay a much lower share of the premium than nonunionized workers do.

Family-friendly workplace policies are more important than ever before because more families are juggling work and care-giving responsibilities. For example, nearly 25 percent of U.S. households provide care to people aged 50 or older; and 75 percent of children live in families where all parents work.

“As Congress prepares to debate the Employee Free Choice Act in coming months, policy makers should understand that unions have helped improve workplace policies for thousands of working families and could do the same things for millions of families if EFCA becomes the law of the land,” said report co-author Netsy Firestein, executive director of the nonprofit Labor Project For Working Families.

To download “Family-Friendly Workplaces: Do Unions Make a Difference?” go to <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu> or <http://www.working-families.org>

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