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A BETTER BALANCE’S 2019 NEW YORK STATE WORKING FAMILIES AGENDA

At our core, A Better Balance’s mission is to help workers care for themselves and their families without compromising their economic security. ABB has been proud to work in partnership with New York State to advance many pioneering solutions for women and caregivers, as leaders of the coalitions to pass both the Women’s Equality Act and, more recently, New York’s groundbreaking paid family leave law.

New York has long been a leader in advancing protections for working families. But there is more to do. All too often, those with personal medical needs, be it the flu or a more serious illness, are left with few workplace protections or protected time off when they need it most. Caregivers still face an uphill battle when it comes to balancing the need to care for a family member while still earning a paycheck. And pregnant women are still pushed off the job when pregnant or discriminated against for breastfeeding.

A Better Balance’s Working Families Agenda lays out key policies we view as integral to advancing equality and opportunity for women and caregivers in New York State.

PRIORITIES

➤ Paid Family & Medical Leave

○ The Policies:

- Modernize temporary disability insurance to provide New Yorkers with paid medical leave that offers full employment protections and benefits that are high enough to be meaningful to workers who need them.
- Remove outdated exceptions to coverage to ensure that all private and public sector employees in New York State have a legal right to paid family and medical leave.
- Make paid family leave benefits more portable, ensuring that workers in our changing economy can use the benefits they have paid for.

➤ Paid Sick Time:

○ The Policy:

- Guarantee that every worker in New York State can earn and use a minimum amount of paid sick time to care for themselves and their families when they are ill, injured, or need preventive care as well as to address safety needs such as relocation and court appearances related to domestic violence, stalking, trafficking, or sexual assault. The policy should include clear prohibitions on retaliation for using paid sick time protected under the law.



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➤ **Pregnancy & Breastfeeding Accommodations**

○ **The Policies:**

- Update the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act to explicitly include related medical conditions, including lactation.
- Update the Human Rights Law to include caregiver discrimination.
- Expand construction of lactation spaces in new buildings and re-outfit existing public and private buildings to support nursing parents.
- Ensure the State has strong and effective state agencies to enforce pregnancy discrimination complaints and develop an investigation fast-track for pregnancy accommodation complaints at the Division of Human Rights so that workers can stay safe and on the job.

➤ **Fair & Flexible Scheduling**

○ **The Policies:**

- Ensure workers, especially in the retail and food industries, can have a fair say in, and advance notice of, their schedules.
- Implement flexible work laws that require employers to consider alternative work arrangements without fear of retaliation.

➤ **Family Definitions**

○ **The Policies:**

- Expand the definition of family under the paid family leave law to include siblings and other extended and chosen family.
- Ensure that new policies for paid sick time and caregiver discrimination include definitions of family that cover close relatives, extended family, and chosen family.

➤ **Equal Pay**

○ **The Policies:**

- End the practice of asking about, and relying on, salary history to set pay rates.
- Expand the definition of equal pay for equal work. Pay workers equally for “comparable” or “substantially similar” work, rather than equal work.
- End the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers.
- Extend pay reporting requirements to private businesses.

➤ **Childcare**

○ **The Policies**

- Expand New York’s childcare subsidy program and availability of affordable child care, Pre-K, and after-school programs.
- Provide leave for parents to address children’s educational needs.



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RELATED KEY ISSUES

- **Reproductive Health**
 - Pass the Reproductive Health Act and Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act.
 - Establish a comprehensive maternal mortality review board.

- **Sexual Harassment & Anti-Discrimination Law**
 - Lower the employee threshold in the Human Rights Law from 4 employees to one employee for all forms of discrimination.
 - Extend anti-discrimination protections to independent contractors.
 - Enforce new anti-sexual harassment laws, including the policy and training requirements for New York employers.

- **Long-Term Caregiving**
 - Support efforts to expand long term care in New York State.