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National Initiative

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1992, the Labor Project for Working Families (Labor Project) is a national organization that works with and brings together unions, advocacy and community groups to advance family-friendly workplace policies that build and support family economic security such as family leave, paid sick days and worker-controlled flexibility. Our national labor education and resource network – LEARN *WorkFamily* – provides resources and technical assistance on organizing, bargaining, and advocating for work family policies. We also manage the nation's only online database of union negotiated contract language on family-friendly workplace programs and benefits.

In California, we chair and coordinate a pioneering labor-community coalition – California Work & Family Coalition – that has successfully advocated for landmark legislation such as the California Paid Family Leave law.

In 2010, the Labor Project launched a special **National Initiative** to expand the scope and reach of our work by instilling labor's voice and increasing labor's engagement in local, statewide and national efforts on work family policymaking. Through the National Initiative, we participate in efforts to advance family-friendly workplace policies; provide up-to-date information to unions on various federal and local policy initiatives; help to engage unions in local and state policy efforts; and offer educational resources, expertise, and technical support as needed.

The National Initiative aims to:

- Deepen labor's engagement in work family policymaking at the national level using strategies that focus on growth, collective bargaining, and public policy.
- Represent labor issues in national policy discussions on affordable family leave, paid sick days, worker-controlled workplace flexibility and other related areas.
- Seek out opportunities to insert work family issues into national administrative or regulatory proposals.
- Strengthen labor's engagement with coalitions, community and advocacy groups, and other stakeholders.

WHY DO UNIONS NEED TO GET INVOLVED?

Strong families and a robust 21st century economy will require new workplace policies and the political will to address current imbalances in the American workplace. We live in times where the stakes are high for all workers. Now more than ever, we need good jobs – where workers have dignity, the right to collectively bargain, a healthy and safe work environment, good wages and benefits. But it's time we set the bar higher. We also need good jobs that do not force us to choose between a paycheck and a new baby, a sick child, a disabled sibling, or a parent who has Alzheimer's. These are core labor issues. Labor's support is crucial to building the 21st century workplace where workers can take the time to care for themselves and those important to their lives without losing their jobs, wages or benefits.

KEY NATIONAL INITIATIVE PARTNERS

National Advisory Board: Our national advisory board comprises representatives from 10 international labor unions who provide ongoing guidance, advice, and support to the Labor Project with particular emphasis on national policy and unions..

Family Values @ Work: The Labor Project is a lead organization in this 16-state consortium of labor-community coalitions working for paid sick days, family leave insurance and other policies that value families at work.

Work and Family Strategy Council: As founding members of the Council, we are working with national advocacy groups and thought leaders on long-term sustainable policies to build the 21st century American workplace – paid family and medical leave, paid sick days, and workplace flexibility.

HOW CAN UNIONS GET INVOLVED?

- Contribute to support National Initiative program staff.
- Contribute in-kind (printing, press/communications support, administrative assistance)
- Join/support state and local campaigns
- Help us generate national buzz by hosting/speaking at events, and promoting work and family economic security issues through social/new media networks.

MORE INFORMATION?

For more information about the National Initiative and how to get involved, please contact our National Policy Director Carol Joyner at carol@working-families.org or (202) 537-1645, x270.