



**City Council Oversight Hearing  
NYC Employees' Paid Parental Leave  
September 27, 2016**

**INTRODUCTION**

Good morning, Chair Miller, Chair Garodnick and members of the Civil Service and Labor and Economic Development Committees. I am Dawn Pinnock, Deputy Commissioner for Human Capital for the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). I am accompanied by my colleague Stella Xu, Executive Director of Strategic Planning. I am here today to discuss the implementation of the City's Paid Parental Leave (PPL) program, which was enacted by Mayor's Personnel Order 2016/1, signed on January 7, 2016. The Order was effective December 22, 2015 and entitles employees with qualifying events between November 9, 2015 and December 21, 2015 to receive a prorated benefit.

This benefit is available to Managerial and Original Jurisdiction employees and allows eligible employees to be paid for a substantial portion of their time off in order to care for and bond with their child.

This new benefit comes at no new cost to New York City taxpayers. The Personnel Order repurposes an existing managerial raise of .47 percent scheduled for July 2017 and caps vacation time at 25 days for the targeted population covered by this benefit.

**IMPLEMENTATION**



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DCAS collaborated with the NYC Office of Labor Relations, Office of Management and Budget and the Law Department to implement this new policy following the Mayor's announcement. Personnel Service Bulletin (PSB) 420-5 was posted on January 11, 2016 to provide agencies with guidelines, definitions and procedures for PPL. In drafting this PSB, we compared PPL to existing policies and regulations such as the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the City's Child Care Leave, both of which are unpaid benefits.

To provide notification of this benefit, a memorandum was sent to Agency Personnel Officers (APOs) across all City agencies notifying them of the new policy and referencing the Mayor's Personnel Order. An announcement was also posted on DCAS' APO Community Portal, a valuable electronic resource where agency APOs can review policy information and ask for assistance with any questions they may have. DCAS has been advising agencies on inquiries and policy interpretations regarding PPL and will continue to assist agencies to ensure consistent implementation across the City.

To ensure standardized recordkeeping across the City, a form entitled, "Request for Paid Parental Leave Form" was created and attached to PSB 420-5. Employees must submit this form along with timely documentation of the qualifying event to their HR departments for approval.

Once granted, leave can be used in full or intermittently. The leave may also be applied retroactively following receipt and verification of documentation. Eligible employees will be required to sign an acknowledgment that indicates they are seeking



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to use Paid Parental Leave for the birth of a child (i.e., a biological child born into the care and custody of the employee), or the placement of a child with the eligible employee for adoption or foster care.

Where the qualifying event is the placement of a child with the eligible employee for adoption or foster care, the eligible employee will also have to certify that, should the adoption or foster care placement cease during the PPL period, the employee will immediately notify the Employer. If a child ceases to remain in the employee's care during PPL, the employee shall notify the Employer and either return to work or apply to use other leave as appropriate.

The six weeks of paid leave at 100 percent of salary can be combined with accrued eligible leave, if any. As per the Mayor's Personnel Order, the six weeks of leave must be taken within 24 weeks of the qualifying event (birth, adoption, foster care). Once the first day of Paid Parental Leave is taken, the employee must use the remaining Paid Parental Leave within the following 12 weeks.

### **UTILIZATION**

DCAS has been monitoring the usage of Paid Parental Leave across city agencies since its implementation and will continue to do so on a quarterly basis. As a means to track leave usage, DCAS coordinated with OPA to create new leave codes in CityTime. The creation of these codes allows us to track leave usage agency by agency and in the aggregate.



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As of August 31, 2016, 164 employees across 35 agencies have benefited from Paid Parental Leave.; 52% female and 48% male. The median age of users is 36 years and average age is 37 years. The median years of service is 5 with an average of 6 years of service. The median number of PPL work days used by each employee is 30 and average days used is 24. By our estimations, the total cost of Paid Parental Leave as of August 31, 2016 is \$1.6 million.

**CONCLUSION**

Paid Parental Leave provides a comprehensive and generous benefit for eligible employees. Employees are receiving the flexibility to create a greater work life balance while also keeping their salary whole for an additional 6 weeks while caring for their child. Given the usage within the short time frame after the order was issued, it is clear that the Paid Parental Leave policy has been popular with the eligible population.

DCAS will continue to provide our agency partners and the municipal workforce with guidance with respect to the policy and its utilization.

At this time, we would be happy to answer any questions from the Council. Thank You.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Good afternoon, Chair Miller, Chair Garodnick and members of the Civil Service and Labor and Economic Development Committees.

My name is Paul Rodríguez. I serve as Deputy Counsel to the Mayor. I am extremely proud to work for a Mayor who cares so strongly about families and workers' well-being, as demonstrated through his commitment such policies as universal pre-K and paid sick and parental leave.

As the Mayor said when he first announced Paid Parental Leave, "Too many new parents face an impossible choice: taking care of their child or getting their paycheck. ... This is a common sense policy that will make for healthier and more financially stable working families – making it good for employees and employers."

Studies consistently show the positive impact of Paid Parental Leave not just for employees, but also for employers and the people they serve – helping to reduce turnover, while ensuring that employees are able to return to work ready.

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

Speaking as someone who has utilized Paid Parental Leave, I cannot overstate what a difference it has made to my family.

When my son Sebastian was born this summer, I took the full 6 weeks to care for him and my wife. Those 6 weeks were an incredible opportunity for us to bond as a family. My wife will attest that to this day I won't put him down from the moment I get home until he goes to bed at night. When a neighbor saw my cousin carrying the baby this weekend, he expressed surprise that the baby even detached from me.

Paid Parental Leave was also a Godsend to my wife. After a difficult C-section, my wife had very limited mobility for quite some time. The doctor ordered her to not carry anything heavier than the baby; that would include anything from a car seat, to a cooking pot or a baby bag. While her birth was much easier than many stories we have heard, she still often says to me that she cannot imagine how she would have been able to manage without someone to help care for both her and the baby during those first difficult few weeks.

### **SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The Mayor and his staff have truly done an incredible job of creating a supportive work environment for new families, where it is understood and expected that men and women alike will fully utilize this precious time.

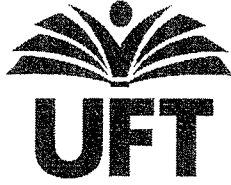
Coming from the private sector, I can attest from conversations with colleagues and friends at several firms throughout New York City, that employees often express concern that taking time off to care for their families will reflect poorly on their commitment to the job. Even absent evidence that taking parental leave will affect their career mobility, too many employees in the private sector, particularly men, feel a great deal of anxiety about taking time off during upon the birth, adoption or fostering of their child, and often take less time than they feel is necessary or otherwise appropriate.

After we passed the first trimester and were ready to share the news that my wife was pregnant, I too was embarrassed to ask for time off when the baby came. Before I even worked up the nerve to broach the subject, my supervisor, Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley, interrupted with delight that I would be able to enjoy Paid Parental Leave. Similarly, when I informed HR, so that I could start the process of adding a new person to my health insurance, they sent me the Paid Parental Leave forms, making it clear that I was welcome to take the full 6 weeks, without having to go through hoops or make any particularized justifications.

It is a testament to the supportive work environment that exists here in the City that Paid Parental Leave has been utilized widely, and in almost equal numbers by men and women.

## **WRAP-UP**

I truly could not be more grateful to the Mayor for the opportunity to spend those precious first weeks with my family, and could not be prouder to serve in his administration, working to support all working families.



FOR THE RECORD

Submission to the joint Committees on Civil Service and Labor and Economic Development  
of the New York City Council regarding  
establishing paid family leave  
by the United Federation of Teachers  
Michael Mulgrew, President  
September 27, 2016

The United Federation of Teachers (UFT) wishes to thank Chairs I. Daneek Miller and Daniel Garodnick and the Committees on Civil Service and Labor and Economic Development for the opportunity to share our views on establishing paid family leave.

On behalf of the 200,000 members of the UFT, we strongly support establishing paid family leave. Further, we commend your committees for taking the time to review this important issue affecting every employee of the City of New York.

The UFT has worked over the years to extend the current policy because it doesn't apply fairly to the needs of our members' families. Leave granted via sick days for women giving birth naturally for six weeks or via caesarean section for eight weeks doesn't address adoption or foster care, plus it completely dismisses the needs of partners deserving comparable leave.

It's well-known that, historically, women are the overwhelming majority of our union's members. Importantly, the city just hired almost 5,800 new teachers. From our perspective, getting paid leave right is a retention imperative.

While discussions over the inadequacy of the city's policy have been ongoing, we need action. The UFT applauds Mayor Bill de Blasio for taking the lead on keeping working families whole, recognizing that policies from a bygone era undermine the financial stability of today's workforce. Negotiations are never easy. But, we hope to conclude negotiations for paid family leave that are both fair and affordable for our union—and the administration.

Affording both parents and partners paid leave contributes to the family's overall health and well-being and makes sound financial sense. Citing research from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, health and science journalist Rita Rubin reports on the connection of "paid maternity leave to better health for mothers and babies—lower rates of postpartum depression and newborn and infant mortality and higher rates of breastfeeding and childhood immunizations."<sup>1</sup>

There's a salutary social and economic benefit to paternity leave, according to a review of studies of leading nations from *The Economist*. Noting that paternity leave is often limited and more often low paid or unpaid, it still has a positive impact on secondary school performance for the children. Additionally, women's career trajectory improves when partners share childcare duties. This of course skews toward benefitting higher income earners, as many lower income families can ill afford unpaid leave, no matter the time frame allotted.<sup>2</sup>

When our officers and representatives go into the schools and offices where our members work, it should come as no surprise that this is a pressing issue members raise over and over again. Family leave should never be relegated to only the few who can afford to be home with new babies.

Our union is deeply committed to equity and access to health and financial wellness for all working people in our city, most especially our own members. Shifting the paradigm from unpaid to paid benefits comes at a cost. Reiterating our earlier point, the cost must be fair and affordable for all parties. The UFT stands ready to work together with the administration to finalize the details on bringing this important policy change to conclusion.

Again, we thank the Committees on Civil Service and Labor and Economic Development for leading the City Council's advocacy on behalf of our city's workers, many who come from families making tough financial choices.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> "U.S. Dead Last Among Developed Countries When It Comes To Paid Maternity Leave,"

Rita Rubin, *Forbes*, April 6, 2016

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/ritarubin/2016/04/06/united-states-lags-behind-all-other-developed-countries-when-it-comes-to-paid-maternity-leave/#b4e030e5ada0>

<sup>2</sup> "The benefits of paternity leave," *The Economist*, May 14, 2015

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2015/05/economist-explains-18>

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**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/27/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kenneth J. Gainer

Address: 395 50th END Ave

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Dawn M. Pinnoch

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/27/16

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Name: Stella Xu

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 9/27/2016

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Name: PAUL RODRIGUEZ

Address: 631 Carroll St., Apt. 2, Brooklyn, NY

I represent: Office of the Mayor

Address: City Hall

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