

No Leave for You

Posted by [RJ Bean](#) On 03/08/2016



"Congratulations on your new baby boy," the doctor tells you as he's swaddled in the standard hospital blanket, gazing into your eyes as you get lost in his. You smile from ear to ear as your heart fills with warmth from the joy this beautiful life has brought to your family. Nothing else seems to matter in that moment. Your baby boy is healthy with all his fingers and all his toes as he yawns, yearning to explore the new world that surrounds him. You waited patiently for months to hold him in your arms, and now you truly understand the feeling of never wanting to let him go. You look over at your wife, tears filling your eyes from the joy that has now spread throughout your body.

You can't help but to cry!

Not because you're holding one of the greatest gifts life has to offer. You're crying because your wife has to take eight weeks of unpaid maternity leave, forcefully forfeiting four paychecks to do what's best for your family; bond with your newborn son.

The tears that initially filled your eyes begin to stroll down your face as you realize your family will miss four paychecks because the United States does not require companies to offer paid maternity leave.

The most important thing for your newborn is to be with his parents (at the minimum his mother) for the first few weeks of their life. However, your lovely wife now has to bond and connect with your beautiful son, while also worrying about scraping up the cash to pay the mortgage, student loan, groceries, electricity, water bill, and any other bill that is pertinent to the survival of our own creation.

She has a great job with great benefits. I have a great job with great benefits. We live in a great country with great benefits. But there's one giant problem that's ever so evident when a baby is introduced to a family.

The United States does not require companies to offer paid maternity leave to mothers of newborn children.

You heard that right. The U.S., the same country that touts family values as being of the utmost importance in our country, does not offer paid maternity leave to instill those values and loving relationships from birth.

Your right as a loving mother (or father when compared to other countries) to stay at home with your loved one in the first few weeks of his life (paid) is stripped away from you.

My wife and I work hard and support a plethora of programs for the state and nation via our taxes; programs that we'll probably never have the pleasure of knowing exactly where or who our money is helping.

We brought a life into this world so he can be better than us. So he can strive for more than we do. So he can achieve more than we ever will. But the pivotal moments after birth, when life is so precious and we're still figuring out who our little guy is, are supposed to be spent without my wife receiving a paycheck?

That's ludicrous!

Don't tell me I need to budget my money to cover for the missed paychecks. Don't tell me I should've prepared financially for this situation.

But, please, do tell me why we, as the United States of America, do not require companies to offer paid maternity leave.

Tell me why other countries offer hundreds of days off for the mother and father to split amongst their miracle, all paid.

If you can give me a valid answer as to why the United States is in company with Swaziland and Papua New Guinea in regards to not offering paid maternity leave, then you can preach to me about how I should have saved money and budgeted for the arrival of my son.

Until then, I'll scrape by with what we can afford, talk to the wall about how odd it is that our beautiful new mothers are not offered paid maternity leave, and worry about throwing my child into daycare two weeks after his birth because the mortgage is due, student loans are due, and the basic necessities of life are calling.

You can preach to me all you want about family values, but it's hard to buy into that gospel when money is being spent on things like adding a median to a road with six trees, watching paint dry or having six guys stand around to fix a hole in the road the size of a quarter. I can think of at least one area that could use a little help from my friends!

Mothers in Russia, South Korea, China and Saudi Arabia (and many other countries) all receive paid maternity leave. But not my wife or maybe not your wife either!

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