

California Commission ON THE
WSTATUS OF
WOMEN
... AND GIRLS ...

May 24, 2016

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WILLIS, MD
Commissioner

Nancy Kirshner-
Rodriguez,
Executive Director

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls supports the Legislative Women's Caucus Child Care Budget Request. For more than fifty years the Commission has been engaged in understanding and advocating for women's child care needs. Child care is a fundamental part of the progress for women's rights; as such it was one of the first issues pursued by the Commission in 1968 when the Commission's Child Care Committee was established.

Much has changed for women in the last half century. Women in California have fought hard for gains in education and career access, financial freedom, reproductive dignity, and social safety-net programs to support self-sufficiency and empowerment. The importance of access to affordable, quality childcare remains a constant. Child care is the thread holding together the fabric of empowerment for many women, especially for the millions of women who have received, or are currently receiving, subsidized child care in order to work and provide security for their children, and to improve their lives through education and professional development. When California lost one-third of its child care and development system during the recession, the impact on many women and their families was deep and enduring.

The Legislative Women's Caucus has led a strong effort to redress the gaps in our state's child care delivery system as the result of these difficult cuts. Renewed investment, specifically in the form of an initial \$800 million in the 2016-17 budget will help repair the infrastructure of the state-supported child care system that has been built over many years and benefited millions of lives and futures. This investment would serve tens of thousands of children, prioritize our youngest learners, prevent disruption of care for children, and recognize the important and professional nature of the work providers deliver to our state's working families.

For these reasons the Commission supports the Legislative Women's Caucus Child Care Budget Request.

Respectfully,

Bethany A. Renfree, Policy Director

cc: Nancy Kirshner-Rodriguez, Executive Director, CCSWG



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Re: Senate Bill 23 (Mitchell) - Support

Dear Governor Brown:

The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls supports Senate Bill 23 (Mitchell) for the repeal of the Maximum Family Grant rule in the California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program. For over fifty years, the Commission has played an important role in the safeguarding of reproductive rights and choices for California's women, and in assessing and raising awareness of the economic needs of California's most vulnerable women and children.

State law prevents parents receiving assistance through the CalWORKs program from receiving a grant for any child born to the household while any member of the household is receiving aid. This is known as the Maximum Family Grant (MFG) rule. Without the MFG rule, the amount most households would receive in additional benefits for the newborn child is \$128/month, hardly enough to pay for the child's basic needs. Without it, these children face increased risk of homelessness and other hardship associated with extreme poverty. The MFG rule is intended to control impoverished parents' decisions about the size of their families and when to conceive through the threat of economic hardship. The MFG rule has not led to changes in birthrates among poor women but has resulted in women being forced to make desperate decisions that endanger the health and safety of themselves and their children.

State law allows for a few exemptions to the MFG rule. These include when a child is conceived as a result of incest or rape or from a failure of contraceptives, but *only* for those contraceptives identified in state statute. Mothers whose infants are subject to the MFG rule are forced to decide between disclosing personal and confidential medical information, such as their status as a rape victim or use of contraception, or going without a basic need grant for their child. While it is appropriate for a caseworker to be trained at offering support should a rape or incest be reported, it is abhorrent for government to force a victim, under threat of enduring deeper poverty, to do so.

The Commission supports Senate Bill 23 to prevent the harmful health and human development consequences of denying services to infants and to restore reproductive privacy to CalWORKs families.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bethany A. Renfree".

Bethany A. Renfree, Policy Director

cc: Nancy Kirshner-Rodriguez, Executive Director, CCSWG



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Dear Governor Brown:

The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, an independent, nonpartisan state agency advocating for over fifty years to protect and improve opportunities for California women and girls, supports Assembly Bill (AB) 1676, which would prohibit employers from seeking salary history from job applicants. Persistent discrepancies in compensation, hiring, and promotion limit opportunity for women and girls in our state, create barriers to success, deprive the state of valuable human and intellectual capital, and reinforce the economic impacts of historical bias.

Since 2009, the wage gap has barely budged — remaining stubbornly at 79 cents for every dollar a white man makes. **For women of color the inequality is even worse**, African American and Hispanic women make just 64 and 44 cents, respectively, for every \$1 of their white male counterpart.

Recently, government officials have started to recognize the discriminatory impact that prior salaries can have on women in the job market. Last April, on Equal Pay Day, the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission advised employers on important steps they could take to ensure equal pay for equal work, including eliminating “discriminatory pay gaps on the basis of prior salary...” This is because when employers make salary decisions during the hiring process based on prior salaries, women are often penalized for salary histories that were discriminatory. This practice continues to build on historical inequities, making it more difficult to close the gender wage gap. If the person is qualified to do the job, then the employer should pay what the job is objectively worth.

The value of each job should be based on the skill, education and experience needed to fulfill the job duties. By creating a less biased structure for negotiating pay during the hiring process, AB 1676 will be a proactive way to help empower women to negotiate a fair salary and hopefully get us closer to achieving pay equity in California.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bethany A. Renfree".

Bethany A. Renfree, Policy Director

cc: Nancy Kirshner-Rodriguez, Executive Director, CCSWG



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Re: SB 878 (Leyva) The Reliable Scheduling Act - SUPPORT

Dear Governor Brown:

The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls supports SB 878 (Leyva), a bill that would create certainty for workers and employers by giving employees adequate advanced notice of their work schedule. The Commission is a historical leader in bringing issues of women's rights in employment, the workplace, and family life, to the forefront of public awareness and policy work in California.

The ability to plan for the activities of daily life, including coordinating child care, pursuing higher education, and planning for medical appointments is of monumental importance for working mothers. Yet, research demonstrates that unreliable schedules are remarkably common. More than 40 percent of early career hourly workers (ages 26 to 32) receive one week or less advance notice of their job schedules. For many women this period of early career development intersects with the responsibilities of raising young children.

Without reliable schedules, working families are more likely to use public benefit programs, more vulnerable to experience hardships and less likely to climb into the middle class. Erratic schedules have severe effects on workers' lives, and on their families' wellbeing. Many mothers experience fatigue and stress that affects family life and health outcomes, and impacts their ability to achieve financial security. Ensuring workers receive advance notice of their schedule and "modified" pay when their planned shift is changed will help alleviate these negative impacts on women and families.

For all of these reasons, the Commission is happy to support SB 878.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bethany A. Renfree".

Bethany A. Renfree, Policy Director

cc: Nancy Kirshner-Rodriguez, Executive Director, CCSWG

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Re: SB 1166 (Jackson) New Parent Leave Act - SUPPORT

Dear Governor Brown:

The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls strongly supports SB 1166 (Jackson), a bill that would provide up to three months of job protected maternity and paternity leave for almost all California employees. The Commission is a historical leader in bringing issues of women's rights in employment and the workplace to the forefront of public awareness and policy work in California.

While California is one of only three states to offer Paid Family Leave (PFL) for new parents, it remains impossibly out of reach for the over 40% of workers who don't qualify for job protected leave under the California Family Rights Act (CFRA) or the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) because they work for an employer with less than 50 employees. In a recent study of California's PFL program, 37% of respondents expressed concern that if they took PFL, their opportunities for advancement would be affected; they would face retaliation, or be fired. SB 1166 would alleviate that risk by extending parental leave rights for new parents (including domestic partners and adoptive or foster parents) who work for employers with 5 or more employees.

At a time when financial security and healthcare coverage are so important, the risk of losing one's job to take leave to bond with a new child is simply a risk that many new parents cannot afford to take. The benefits of parental leave on the health and welfare of children, working parents, and the state's economy have been well-documented. Research shows that bonding is incredibly important to child health, well-being and brain development. And job-protected Paid Family Leave increased new mothers' wage growth and future employment rates. Fathers who take parental leave are more engaged with their newborns, promoting greater gender equity at home and at work.

For all of these reasons, the Commission is happy to support SB 1166.

Respectfully,


Bethany A. Renfree, Policy Director

cc: Nancy Kirshner-Rodriguez, Executive Director, CCSWG