

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 605

Recognizing that the United States needs to support and strengthen mothers in the workforce by investing in the Mom Economy.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 20, 2023

Ms. MENG submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

RESOLUTION

Recognizing that the United States needs to support and strengthen mothers in the workforce by investing in the Mom Economy.

Whereas mothers are an essential part of the American workforce and the United States economy;

Whereas 2,500,000 women left the workforce in the first year of the COVID–19 pandemic, compared with 1,800,000 men, largely as a result of the burdens of childcare, work, and remote learning;

Whereas maternal employment fell by 15.7 percent as a result of the COVID–19 pandemic, compared to paternal employment which fell by 9.6 percent in the same time period;

Whereas at least 4 out of every 10 women report having experienced gender discrimination at work;

Whereas, on average, women are paid 77 cents for every dollar paid to men;

Whereas Black women, Latinas, Native women, and many communities of Asian-American Pacific-Islander women experience higher poverty rates and higher wage gaps compared to White, non-Hispanic men;

Whereas women occupy close to two-thirds of jobs that pay the Federal minimum wage or just a few dollars above it;

Whereas even 1 percent of mothers leaving the workforce would result in an estimated \$8,700,000,000 economic fallout for families;

Whereas strong investments in childcare are essential for women's full employment, and United States gross domestic product would increase by 10 to 15 basis points with such investments;

Whereas half of families in the United States with children under the age of 18 have a mother who contributes at least 40 percent of household earnings;

Whereas mothers of color play a vital role in the financial stability of their families with 79 percent of Black mothers, 64 percent of Native American mothers, 49 percent of Latina mothers, and 43 percent of Asian-American and Pacific-Islander mothers serving as breadwinners;

Whereas, in addition to the economic security that mothers provide for their families, mothers are more than 3 times as likely as fathers to be responsible for most of the housework and caregiving in their households;

Whereas, in addition to caregiving for children, mothers disproportionately shoulder unpaid caregiving responsibilities for older relatives and other family members with disabilities;

Whereas women are twice as likely as men to say that taking time off had a negative impact on their professional development;

Whereas industries dominated by women disproportionately fail to provide family-friendly workplace benefits like paid family and medical leave, health insurance, and retirement plans;

Whereas 44 percent of workers are not eligible for unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons as provided for by the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.);

Whereas 3 out of 10 women without access to paid leave exit the workforce after giving birth;

Whereas paid leave policies can reduce the number of women leaving their jobs by 20 percent in the first year after welcoming a child and up to 50 percent after 5 years;

Whereas mothers sometimes find childcare costs are almost as much as their paychecks, creating a financial incentive for mothers to leave the workforce in exchange for childcare duties;

Whereas 40 percent of parents have gone into debt due to the high costs of childcare;

Whereas the childcare crisis costs the United States \$122,000,000,000 each year, including \$78,000,000,000 in lost earnings and job search expenses, \$23,000,000,000 in lost workforce productivity, and \$21,000,000,000 in lost tax revenue;

Whereas a significant investment in childcare is simultaneously job creating and job enabling, creating good jobs and supporting parental employment;

Whereas, by encouraging women to remain in the workforce full time, access to paid leave and childcare significantly boost mothers' lifetime earning potential;

Whereas the 2021 temporary expansion of the child tax credit lifted 3,700,000 children out of poverty;

Whereas families used the child tax credit to cover routine expenses, improve nutrition, decrease reliance on credit cards and other high-risk financial services, and make long-term educational investments; and

Whereas families of color saw the largest quality of life improvements due to the expansion of the child tax credit in 2021: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that—

3 (1) the United States needs to prioritize a Mom
4 Economy that invests in the caregiving infrastruc-
5 ture required to adequately support and empower
6 mothers in the workforce and sustain a thriving
7 economy;

8 (2) mothers, especially mothers of color, face
9 systemic economic and social inequalities that re-
10 strict their ability to balance parenting responsibil-
11 ities with workplace roles and limit their professional
12 advancement;

1 (3) mothers play an integral role not only in the
2 financial well-being of their families but in the pro-
3 ductivity of the American economy as a whole;

4 (4) the United States should invest in its moth-
5 ers by expanding and developing the social safety net
6 in order to secure meaningful and sustainable eco-
7 nomic growth by investing, at a minimum, in pro-
8 grams including—

9 (A) robust paid family and medical leave
10 plans for all workers, including—

11 (i) paid parental leave following the
12 birth of a child or the placement of a child
13 for adoption or foster care, provided in
14 equal amounts for all parents regardless of
15 gender; and

16 (ii) paid leave policies that can be
17 used for family caregiving and workers'
18 own medical leave;

19 (B) paid menstrual leave and remote work
20 accommodations for workers experiencing de-
21 bilitating menstrual or menopause symptoms;

22 (C) investment in the childcare industry
23 with the goal of providing universal childcare
24 and early learning, including—

1 (i) robust funding for the Head Start
2 and Early Head Start programs;

3 (ii) Federal financial support for
4 childcare programs to guarantee all fami-
5 lies have access to affordable and high
6 quality child care; and

7 (iii) commitments to pay childcare
8 workers a dignified, living wage;

9 (D) access to nutritious food as a health
10 and human right, including through—

11 (i) boosting SNAP maximum and
12 minimum benefits and removing barriers to
13 access, including time restrictions and ad-
14 ditional work requirements; and

15 (ii) increasing funds for school meals
16 and other nutrition programs to combat
17 child hunger and making school meals
18 more accessible;

19 (E) the implementation and expansion of
20 child poverty reduction tools that improve in-
21 come security, infant and maternal health, and
22 educational and economic outcomes into the
23 second generation, including—

24 (i) a permanent expansion of the child
25 tax credit; and

1 (ii) improvements on the earned in-
2 come tax credit, which lifts millions of peo-
3 ple above the poverty line each year and
4 boosts labor force participation among sin-
5 gle mothers;

6 (F) addressing the Nation's maternal mor-
7 tality crisis through critical investments in ma-
8 ternal health care, including ensuring access to
9 the full range of reproductive health care and
10 family planning;

11 (G) raising the Federal minimum wage
12 higher for all workers, including tipped workers,
13 and adjusting it on a yearly basis to keep pace
14 with inflation; and

15 (H) investments in legislation that ensures
16 protections for LGBTQ+ mothers in the work-
17 place such as the Equality Act and reduces
18 wage discrimination such as the Paycheck Fair-
19 ness Act; and

20 (5) United States policymakers should include a
21 specific focus on working mothers in future policy-
22 making, beyond the aforementioned policies, includ-
23 ing with regards to economic policy, fiscal policy,
24 and social safety net policy, in order to ensure that
25 working mothers and other caregivers can continue

1 to balance their roles as family anchors and care-
2 givers with their work and economic contributions,
3 both to their families and the economy of the United
4 States.

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