



2026.27

## **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF WASHINGTON'S PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, organized Labor has led in the passage and implementation of Washington's best-in-nation paid family and medical leave program since 2017; and,

**WHEREAS**, paid family and medical leave provides up to 18 weeks of wage replacement for workers to care for themselves or family members through a serious medical emergency or welcome a new child into a family; and,

**WHEREAS**, 250,000 Washingtonians were able to take time to care for themselves or their family in fiscal year 2025 without being forced to choose between their paycheck and the family who depends on it; and,

**WHEREAS**, paid family and medical leave provides compensation for the essential work of caregiving, which has historically been invisibly provided by women, uncompensated and ignored by public policy; and,

**WHEREAS**, paid family and medical leave program added \$2 billion in worker replacement wages in 2025 to local economies, allowing working families to pay for groceries, housing, and transportation while also supporting local businesses; these benefits are paid for by employees and employers through a dedicated payroll premium, the majority of which is paid by workers; and,

**WHEREAS**, Washington was one of the first states in the nation to implement a comprehensive, modern paid family and medical leave program, and program uptake has exceeded projections every year since launch; and,

**WHEREAS**, that uptake reflects the program working exactly as intended - more fathers bonding with newborns, more birth parents given time to recover from childbirth, more family members able to care for a loved one going through a medical

crisis, and more workers able to fully heal from serious medical emergencies before returning to work; and,

**WHEREAS**, the program's historic success has not been well supported by a premium structure that exempts very high earnings, creating actuarial pressures that require updating its structure to protect the long-term integrity of benefits that Washington's working families depend on; and,

**WHEREAS**, any reduction to benefit amounts, leave duration, or qualifying events would reverse hard-won progress and once again force workers to choose between the health of their family and the paycheck their family cannot afford to lose; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO (WSLC) and its affiliates continue to advocate for a robust paid family and medical leave system that is equitably accessible to the working people in Washington whose payroll premiums make possible this life-changing benefit; now therefore be it,

**RESOLVED**, that the WSLC urges the Washington State Legislature to pass legislation in the 2027 legislative session to ensure a future for the paid family and medical leave program by protecting existing benefits; and be it further,

**RESOLVED**, that the WSLC will support introduction of this legislation and prioritize it for the 2027 legislative session; and be it finally,

**RESOLVED**, the WSLC will encourage and assist its affiliates to mobilize their members in the legislative fight to protect paid family and medical leave for generations to come.