

[OVT-018] On Amending G-2.0804 Regarding PC(USA) Paid Family Leave
 Source: Presbytery
 Committee: Unassigned
 Event: 224th General Assembly (2020)
 Sponsor: Hudson River Presbytery
 Type: General Assembly Full Consideration

Recommendation

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0804 be amended to read as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italics.]

“The terms of call shall always meet or exceed any minimum requirement of the presbytery in effect when the call is made. The session shall review annually the minister’s terms of call and shall propose for congregational action (G-1.0501) such changes as the session deems appropriate, provided that they meet the presbytery’s minimum requirements. The call shall include *paid family leave of at least twelve weeks, including, but not limited to, leave for birth of a child, adoption, care of a sick family member, etc., and participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly.*”

허드슨 강 노회는 224차 총회(2020)에 현의하여 정서 기에게 다음과 같이 제안된 수정안을 찬성 또는 반대 투표로 노회에 보내도록 지시합니다.

G-2.0804는 다음과 같이 수정될 것입니다: [삼임 될 텍스트는 이탤릭체로 표시됩니다.]

“청빙 조건은 항상 청빙 시점에 시행되고 있는 노회의 최소 요구 사항을 충족하거나 능가해야 한다. 당회는 목사 의 청빙 조건을 매년 검토해야 하고 당회가 당회가 적절하다고 간주하면, 그 변경안이 노회의 최소 요구사항을 충족한다는 조건하에, 그 제안을 공동의회 결의 (G-1.0501)에 부쳐야 한다. 청빙은 *자녀 출산, 입양, 아픈 가족 간호 등을 포함하되 이에 국한되지 않는 12주 이상의 유급 가족 휴가, 그리고 연금과 의료 혜택이나 총회가 승인한 추 가 플랜이 포함된 미국장로교 혜택제도의 가입을 포함해야 한다.*”

Rationale

The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental leave policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay without using other forms of paid leave.¹

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) also voted to encourage the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to improve their paid parental leave policies in accordance with the advice of the 221st General Assembly (2014).²

As a denomination, we have affirmed the importance of supporting families. However, in practice, congregations are put in the precarious position of choosing between taking care of a family or taking care of the financial well-being of the congregation. Many churches cannot afford paid family leave for their pastor(s) in addition to the cost of pulpit supply, yet many pastors cannot afford to be unpaid when they welcome a new member into the family. These choices are difficult ones that often lead to solutions which leave either the pastor or the congregation neglected, but usually the pastor, and lack witness to the love God, Parent of us all, has for the world.

Without a paid family leave policy, the PC(USA) forces parents to make a choice between proper health-care for themselves and their children, and adequate income to provide for their families. It forces family members with sick parents or children to choose work over care, which is antithetical to our call to be compassionate to the ill and infirm.

Without a paid parental leave policy, we uphold false narratives that describe men as "bread-winners" and require them to leave the child-raising to their spouses. Without a paid parental leave policy, we continue to uphold antiquated and unequal traditions that not only reinforce gender stereotypes, bringing harm to families and children, but fail to account for the many different kinds of families our denomination lifts up and celebrates.

Family leave is essential to the well-being of the pastor, the family, and the church. It enforces healthy boundaries, contributes to the financial security of caregivers, and ensures the continued care of both family and congregation in the long term.

In A Brief Statement of Faith, we confess as a church, that the Holy Spirit

... calls *women and men* to all ministries of the Church.

In a broken and fearful world

the Spirit gives us courage

to pray without ceasing,

to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,

to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,

to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,

and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,

we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks

and to live holy and joyful lives,

even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,

praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (*Book of Confessions*, 11.4, Lines 64–76, emphasis added)

With a paid parental leave policy, we have the opportunity to live into this calling of courage in our ministries as

pastors and congregations and in our daily lives as we grow our families and support one another in love. With a paid parental leave policy, we unmask the idolatry of unequal practices and are free to live holy and joyful lives—lives wherein all parents can bond with their children without fear of destitution, and the whole community can grow in love.

This overture seeks to bring equity to the genders involved in caregiving, bringing life into the world, and caring for life as it grows, ages, and dies. While parental leave and family leave constitute different needs, they are equally necessary in the life of a healthy pastor, and therefore we urge the General Assembly to consider the language of family leave and make this a reality for everyone in our employ.

Supporting Statistics

The lack of any kind of paid parental leave creates problems for both parents because, while women are medically cleared to return to work after about at least six weeks (if birth went perfectly), the majority of daycares refuse children before six weeks of age. This puts parents in a lose-lose situation as they must risk their health, their child's care, and their families' overall well-being if proper paid leave is unavailable. Elsewhere in creation, we observe that God's creatures naturally keep their offspring close early in life.³ This policy simply acknowledges the health and financial needs of a new or growing family.

Numerous studies have shown the benefits of paid parental leave for both parents and their children. An increase of 10 weeks paid maternal leave has been associated with a 10 percent decrease in neonatal and infant mortality rate,⁴ and parental leave has been shown to be a cost-effective method for improving child health more generally.⁵ However, the benefits to child health and the decrease in infant mortality are only seen with an increase in paid parental leave.⁶ Moreover, studies that have analyzed the long-term benefits of paid parental leave have found benefits to women's mental health in older age and a decrease in high school dropout rates among their children.⁷

At least half of the contemporary seminary graduates are women, and a large portion of graduates (male and female) are in their child-bearing years.⁸ Some of these female colleagues must negotiate lower pay to receive adequate paid maternity leave in their calls, if they can get the maternity leave. Some of our female colleagues are being told they must prove they are worth the maternity leave. Many men have no leave guaranteed at all. This is a matter of gender justice in our denomination. Because women are the ones giving birth, most studies have focused on the relationship between a mother and her child. However, increases in paid parental leave continue to be met by increases in use of that leave among all parents, allowing parents of all genders to spend more time on their child's care, which has demonstrated health benefits for the child. Indeed, it has been shown that when fathers—or non-birthing parents—are offered comparable paid parental leave, the length of leave they take increases and their involvement in a child's care after the leave period increases.⁹ It is wholly regrettable that non-birthing parents (historically, men) have been denied such crucial bonding and care time with their families for so long. The need for a just paid parental leave policy at this time is urgent as more and more pastors reach retirement age and more and more younger pastors—those in their prime parenting years—seek and negotiate calls.

Across the United States, a mere 14 percent of people have access to paid family leave.¹⁰ As stated above, this justice issue looms large for many workers, and the PC(USA) is not currently acting as a faithful leader. In working toward a solution, it is the profound hope of many young pastors that the denomination will see the opportunity to lead the world to a more faithful, loving approach to family leave.

Endnotes

1. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/5121>, also see *Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 740, electronic version.
2. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000035>, also see *Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 292, electronic version.
3. To put this in perspective, it is illegal in twenty-two states to separate a puppy from its mother before eight weeks. We should be treating humans with at least as much respect as we do dogs. Source: <https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-laws-concerning-minimum-age-sale-puppies>.
4. Jody Heyman, Amy Raub, and Alison Earle, "Creating and Using New Data Sources to Analyze the Relationship Between Social Policy and Global Health: The Case of Maternal Leave," *Public Health Reports* 126 (Suppl 3) (2011): 127–134.
5. Christopher J. Ruhm, "Parental Leave and Child Health," *Journal of Health Economics* 19, no. 6 (November 2000): 931–960.
6. Sakiko Tanaka, "Parental Leave and Child Health Across OECD Countries," *The Economic Journal* 115, no. 501 (February 2005): F7–F28.
7. Mauricio Avendano, Lisa F. Berkman, Agar, Brugiavini, and Giacomo Pasini, "The long-run effect of maternity leave benefits on mental health: Evidence from European countries," *Social Science & Medicine* 132 (May 2015): 45–53; Pedro Carneiro, Katrine Løken, and Kjell Salvanes, "A Flying Start? Maternity Leave Benefits and Long Run Outcomes of Children," IZA Discussion Paper No. 5793.
8. <http://pres-outlook.org/2017/09/pastoral-pipeline-will-enough-ministers-serve-presbyterian-church/>.
9. Arnalds, A., Eydal, G., and Gislaason, I. "Equal rights to paid parental leave and caring fathers—the case of Iceland," *Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration* 9, no. 2 (2013): 323–344.
10. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/23/access-to-paid-family-leave-varies-widely-across-employers-industries/>.

Advocates

CRITERIA FOR OVERTURE EVALUATIONS
OVERTURES FOR 224TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Item: 018 – On Amending G-2.0804 Regarding PC(USA) Paid Family Leave.

1. Likelihood that Presbytery's action will be crucial (are others likely to sign on, whether we do or not?) I assume this will be highly supported.
2. Impact on Presbytery. Does this overture propose a change that will have an effect on congregations in our Presbytery? Most definitely!
3. Special expertise. Is this a topic on which Presbytery has specialized knowledge or expertise? No.
4. Significance to the denomination. Is this an overture that has intrinsic value to the denomination, or is it a minor issue that could be pursued in another way, without an overture? It is important and it does address the financial implications, but offers no financial options for the increased costs. I believe this overture needs to include a requirement that the Board of Pensions be part of the process to assist in finding ways to assist in funding this increase in coverage.
5. Unintended consequences. Is the overture understandable, and does it accomplish its purposes? Without adequate funding, small struggling churches will not be able to meet these requirements. The result will be fewer positions for full time call positions which is doing anything to grow and support the denomination.
6. Relation to Presbytery policy. Are any of Presbytery's policies affected by the overture?
Possibly

Bob Schulz, Stated Clerk

Date: 1/10/2020