

Library of Congress Professional Guild AFSCME Local 2910

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Remarks of Saul Schniderman, President of the Library of Congress Professional Guild, AFSCME Local 2910, at a press event on June 4, 2009 hosted by Representative Carolyn Maloney and Senator James Webb in support of the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act (FEPPLA).

I am here today speaking for over 2500 Library of Congress employees represented by my union, AFSCME.

As federal workers we care about the health and well-being of America's children. And like all good citizens we – and our union – are concerned about the parents who take care of America's children, whether they are mothers or fathers or whether they have children by birth or through adoption.

We support the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act because – like all working parents – federal employees need help in balancing the demands of work with the needs of our families. Young parents coming to work at the Library of Congress begin their careers with zero hours of sick leave and zero hours of annual leave.

How will young parents be able to work for the federal government and, at the same, raise infants and young children? This is a balancing act worthy of the Flying Wallendas.

Please provide us with a safety net – pass the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act.

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This legislation provides that, of the 12 weeks of unpaid leave guaranteed by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), federal employees can substitute 4 weeks of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child.

As the nation's largest employer, the federal government should be a leader in family-friendly workplace policies, but right now the United States is falling far behind. 168 countries recognize the importance of providing paid leave to families. The U.S. does not, along with Lesotho, Swaziland, and Papua New Guinea. We need new policies and investments like the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act that support our working families and set our children on a path for success early in life.