

October 13, 2016

M16-024

To: SPEEA Council Delegates
From: SPEEA Legislative & Public Affairs, NW Young Members, NW New Hire, NW & MW Women's Advocacy and NW & MW L&PA Committees.
Subject: Motion to Support Paid Parental and Family Leave

Background: At some point, nearly everyone will need to take time away from work to deal with a serious personal or family illness, or to care for a new child. Yet, only 13 percent of workers in the United States have access to paid family leave through their employer. According to the U.S. Department of Labor: "Research shows that paid family and medical leave is good for workers, for businesses and for our economy. Yet the U.S. is the only industrialized nation without some form of [paid leave](#)."

Unpaid leave under the federal [Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#) provides important job protections, but it is available to fewer than 50 percent of workers — and many cannot afford to use the benefit.

Laws providing [paid family and medical leave](#) allow workers to continue to earn a paycheck while they take time away from work to:

- Address a serious health condition (including pregnancy);
- Care for a family member with a serious health condition; or
- Care for a newborn, newly-adopted child or newly-placed foster child.

These laws allow workers to meet their health and family needs without jeopardizing their economic security. Companies can enact paid leave policies above and beyond what is required by state or federal law. In recent years, the technology industry has taken the lead and manufacturing companies have lagged far behind in enacting paid family leave policies. Netflix, Adobe, Apple, Google, Microsoft, Facebook, Yahoo! and Amazon have all adopted family leave policies that are 100 percent paid by the company.

The social and economic benefits of providing paid parental and family leave include:

- Improved health and lower mortality rates for children
- Women are more likely to be active in the workforce after childbirth, allowing more equitable career opportunities and wage growth
- Paternity leave increases fathers' involvement in a child's direct care
- Paid leave reduces income inequality and increases family economic stability
- Providing a sought-after benefit to workers gives employers a hiring edge
- Less worker turnover

In past contract negotiations SPEEA has bargained for parental and family leave benefits. During the 2016 NW SPEEA Interim Contract offer this was a topic of interest to membership.

Motion

It is moved that SPEEA will advocate for and support public policies toward establishing paid parental and family leave benefits.

It is further moved that SPEEA will work with companies employing SPEEA members to promote a balance between work and family and to establish employer provided paid parental and family leave benefits in addition to, or in absence of, local, state and/or federal policies.

The SPEEA L&PA Committee recommends approval of this action.

Pro: Benefits our current and future members and provides for a work-life balance for long term careers.

Con: It may require reallocation of resources and / or more public investment to be sustained.

SPEEA Policy Section V Subsection A, Paragraph 5

Passage or adoption of any SPEEA legislative or public issues proposal shall be by published ballot and require:

a) Total affirmative vote cast must be at least a simple majority of the total number of seated Council Representatives. Council Representatives who are employed beyond 50 statute miles from the meeting and are unable to attend are excluded from the total number required.