

**Madison, WI** – Main Street Alliance of Wisconsin was proud to join State Representative Sondy Pope, State Senator Janis Ringhand and the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health for the introduction of legislation that would create a [Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Insurance](#) program.

If enacted, this bill would empower Wisconsin workers to take paid time off from work to take care of their own serious health condition, to care for a family member with a serious health condition, or care for a new baby.

Small businesses across Wisconsin know that by providing paid time off for these important life events it will help keep people in the workforce and provide a critical safety net that smaller employers are currently not in a position to provide.

**This program would help fill that gap and ensure that Main Street is on a level playing field with big business in attracting and retaining top talent.**

Our [virtual press event](#) featured stories from Megan Diaz-Ricks of Madison, Carolyn Desrosiers of the Fox Valley, Anna Ringstad of Ladysmith of the Main Street Alliance and Macy Buhler of Deforest of the Main Street Alliance.

The United States is the only industrialized country in the world that doesn't provide workers with any type of guaranteed paid leave. Nationally, only 19% of workers have paid family leave through their employers. As a result, workers who take time off to take care for themselves or their families often face a significant loss of income. Other states and local governments have begun to effectively address this issue. California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, New York, and Washington, D.C. have enacted public insurance programs that provide workers with paid family leave.

Even though both the federal and Wisconsin Family Medical Leave Acts (FMLA's) do provide important protections to some workers, a significant portion of the workforce is not eligible for these protections and both FMLA's only provide for unpaid time off, which is not financially possible for many employees.

The Main Street Alliance calls on members of the state legislature to commit to co-sponsor AB1098. Our members will be engaging with elected officials and candidates to get them on the record on where they stand on the Wisconsin Family Medical Leave Insurance Act.

Given the huge impact of the pandemic on small business, and the lifeline of the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act demonstrating the importance of paid leave, now is the time to get this done. **We cannot wait any longer.**

**To watch video from the virtual introduction of the Wisconsin Family Medical Leave Insurance Act (AB1098) and to hear powerful stories of how not having paid leave policy in Wisconsin has hurt real Wisconsin women and families link here: <https://fb.watch/bjyIXd8Bj2/>**