

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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****SUMMARY AND ENDORSEMENT LETTERS ATTACHED**

KENNEDY, MALONEY FIGHT FOR WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY FOR FAMILIES

WASHINGTON, DC— Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy and Representative Carolyn Maloney introduced the Working Family Flexibility Act, which will give working Americans the right to request flexible work options in order to balance the demands of their jobs and home life. Senators Dodd, Clinton, Obama, and Congressman George Miller are co-sponsoring this bill.

This legislation will allow employers and employees to engage in constructive dialogue over modifying where and when employees work so they can find the best solutions to the work-life challenges they face.

Attached are three letters of endorsement for this legislation from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the National Partnership for Women & Families, and the Center for Law and Social Policy.

Senator Kennedy said, "Our working families deserve a 21st century answer for these 21st century job challenges. Greater flexibility is an essential part of the response. More than 80% of workers would like more flexibility in their jobs. Almost half of them, however, worry that asking for such flexibility will jeopardize their careers. The Working Families Flexibility Act we're introducing today will give employees the ability to ask for flexible arrangements without fear."

"This bill would be a big step toward helping employees create a more flexible work schedule and strike a better work-family balance. We need to recognize that most American families do not have the luxury of having a stay-at-home parent. With both parents working, and millions of single parents working, we need workplaces that can help people be both good employees and good parents. Countries that have already introduced balanced work-family policies find they are a win-win - they help create

stable families, a more productive workforce, and positive economic outcomes,” said Congresswoman Maloney.

“This legislation marks the beginning of an important conversation about the needs of American workers as they try to juggle the demands of their job with the needs of their families,” said Senator Dodd. “I am pleased to join Senator Kennedy in introducing a bill that will help make this juggling act a little easier. Flexibility meets the needs of employees and employers alike and is an essential element of any successful work environment.”

"Between trying to make ends meet and carving out time to care for their young children and aging relatives, parents across America are often stretched thin and need flexibility at work," Senator Clinton said, "I'm pleased to join Senator Kennedy in introducing this important piece of legislation to support our nation's working families."

"We've heard a lot of talk about family values but this important legislation would actually help families with the increasingly challenging job of earning a living and raising kids or caring for an ill relative," Senator Obama said. "The demands of the global economy mean that Americans are working harder and harder. If we're going to have strong families, we need to make it easier for Americans to work more flexible hours."

“American workers shouldn’t have to choose between their financial security and the important needs of their family. Family-friendly policies work for both workers and their employers by increasing recruitment and retention rates, decreasing absenteeism, and improving productivity,” said Congressman Miller.

SUMMARY OF WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT

The Working Families Flexibility Act gives employees the right to request flexible work options. This legislation will ensure that working Americans can ask their employer for modified schedules so they can balance the demands of their jobs and their home life. The legislation is patterned on similar laws in Europe that have been implemented with great success. Under this legislation:

- An employee may request to modify his or her hours, schedule, or work location.
- Employees and employers will engage in an interactive process to discuss the employee’s needs and how to address them with no or minimal disruption to the employer’s business.
- Employers who deny a request must explain the grounds for the denial.
- Employees who make requests are protected from retaliation.
- Small businesses are exempt from the law.

- The Department of Labor will develop regulations to smoothly administer the process, while ensuring the protection of employees' legal rights.

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