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August 13, 2014

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization in the country, I write regarding the importance of The Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act (FAMILY Act). As the post-recess schedule is established, I urge you to update and pass the FAMILY Act.

As the 21st anniversary of the implementation of FMLA approaches, it is important to take the opportunity to review and make critical updates to the program. One area of improvement includes expanding the program to cover more eligible workers. Under the current act, only 12 percent of the workforce has paid family leave through their employers, and less than 40 percent have paid medical leave through an employer, according to the U.S. Bureau for Labor Statistics. The FAMILY Act would be a self-sufficient program, funded by employee and employer contributions. It will therefore be available for all workers, including those who are part-time, low-income, or young.

LULAC is particularly concerned about this issue because, according to the U.S. Bureau for Labor Statistics, people of color are less likely than white workers to have access to paid leave or any kind of workplace flexibility. In fact, due to the lack of paid sick days, Latino workers are the least likely to visit a doctor in the course of 12 months, resulting in increased emergency room visits and poor personal health. A study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, found that the U.S. could save \$1.1 billion in medical costs with a paid leave program. The Center for American Progress found that nearly 60 percent of Latino workers have young children but only 20 percent have access to paid parental leave and only 35.9 percent have paid sick days. Workers who must take time to care for others, but have no paid leave, earn less in Social Security retirement benefits, receive fewer workplace retirement benefits, and accumulate lower earnings throughout their lifetime. The FAMILY Act program would allow for more financial stability among Latino families, which would translate to a number of health and economic benefits.

On behalf of the over 135,000 members of the League of United Latin American Citizens, I urge you to take time during the post-recess schedule to update and pass the FAMILY Act for the well-being of the nation's families. Please feel free to contact Luis Torres, LULAC Director of Policy and Legislation, at Latorres@LULAC.org to further discuss this issue and any other questions.

Sincerely,

Margaret Moran
LULAC National President