



AMERICAN BENEFITS COUNCIL

NEWS RELEASE

October 26, 2020
NR 2020-12

For additional information:

Jason Hammersla
jhammersla@abcstaff.org/202-422-4652

Bipartisan former members of congress urge fairness, consistency on paid leave laws

Employer leave programs struggling under strain of state, local laws

WASHINGTON, DC - "Paid leave from work is essential to balance the demands of parenting, health and financial well-being," American Benefits Council President James A. Klein said today. "That's why the Council's 220 multi-state member companies provide workers generous paid time off - and why the Council calls for federal legislation enabling uniform nationwide standards that leverage private sector solutions."

The Council's board of directors has unanimously approved [a statement of principles](#) developed under the leadership of distinguished former members of Congress **Earl Pomeroy** and **Lynn Jenkins**. "These principles form the basis for a common-sense, private sector approach to ensuring access to paid leave," Klein said.

The COVID-19 pandemic makes paid leave programs more important than ever because workers who themselves are ill, or caring for a sick family member, can remain at home rather than expose others to the virus. But national employers and their employees are caught in the crossfire of myriad conflicting state and local laws. This forces employers to treat employees performing the same job to receive different benefits simply because of the state or city in which they work," Klein added.

Twenty states and more than two dozen localities have enacted mandatory paid leave requirements for employers, including those with existing paid leave programs and nationwide operations. The statement of principles on paid leave advances the mission of the Council's State Law Project, an initiative to support nationwide uniformity for benefit plan sponsors.

"State and local governments have a legitimate interest in the well-being of their citizens," said State Law Project Co-Chair and former member of Congress Earl Pomeroy (D-ND). "But for

national employers and their workers, adopting federal standards that build upon employer-sponsored programs recognizes the reality of a dispersed and mobile workforce and treats employers and employees fairly.”

“Giving workers the time to care for themselves and their families is vital,” said State Law Project Co-Chair and former member of Congress Lynn Jenkins (R-KS). “The Council’s paid leave principles provide a framework for lawmakers to craft workable, bipartisan legislation.”

“The Council is honored to have the expertise and insights of Lynn Jenkins and Earl Pomeroy to inform our efforts. Not only were they respected leaders on employee benefit matters when they served together in Congress, they also are former senior state officials who understand the respective roles of federal and state policymaking. And they know that bipartisan lawmaking leads to sound and enduring public policies,” said Klein. Pomeroy served as North Dakota Insurance Commissioner and Jenkins was Treasurer of the state of Kansas.

“As on all employee benefit matters, major employers like the Council’s members, lead the way with generous and innovative programs. The Council’s principles demonstrate employers’ commitment to getting it right and we are excited to work with all stakeholders and the next Congress to achieve success,” Klein concluded.

For more information, or to arrange an interview with Council staff or the State Law Report co-chairs, contact Jason Hammersla, Council vice president, communications, at jhammersla@abcstaff.org or by phone at (202) 422-4652 (cell).

#

The Council is a public policy organization whose members include over 220 of the world’s largest corporations, as ranked by Fortune and Forbes. Collectively, the Council’s members either directly sponsor or administer health and retirement benefits for virtually all Americans covered by employer-sponsored plans.