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Contact: Oversight and Government Reform Press Office, 202-225-5051

Towns Committee Votes to Provide Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Benefits

Washington, DC – The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform today took an important step toward improving paid parental leave benefits for federal employees who are new parents. The Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009 (H.R. 626), responds to the needs of tens of thousands of working families in the federal government by providing 4 weeks of paid parental leave for the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child.

Chairman Edolphus “Ed” Towns (D-NY) believes that the federal government, as the largest employer in America, should set the tone for the rest of the country in this area. Chairman Towns has stated his commitment to improving federal workforce policies that will improve the rate of employee retention, including when workers are new parents.

“The country is better served by an experienced and productive federal workforce that is able to adequately provide for the health and well-being of their newborn or newly adopted children,” said Chairman Towns. “The federal government is becoming an increasingly aged workforce so we must begin to implement workplace benefits that allow us to be as attractive, if not more attractive, than the private sector. By doing so, we can create the most skilled and effective workforce for the future.”

By reducing employee turnover, H.R. 626 is also a cost-saving measure for the federal government. For example, it costs almost 20 percent of an employee’s salary to hire and train new workers, compared with only 8 percent to provide an existing, experienced employee with four weeks of paid leave.

“The taxpayers directly benefit when the government retains existing employees, rather than having to hire and re-train new ones,” said Chairman Towns. “I applaud the work of this Committee and urge swift floor action on this important bill.”

H.R. 626 was introduced this Congress by Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY). Last year, it was approved last year by the Oversight Committee and passed the House of Representatives.

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