

The Burden of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women in the Workforce



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Foreword by Congresswoman Katie Porter

No matter how one looks at the economic data—by race, by sector, by income—the story is the same: **the burden of the coronavirus pandemic is falling hardest on women**. Without action, the pandemic will likely erase decades of progress for working women, who are now being forced to shoulder the burden of childcare and remote learning. As a single mom of three young children, I know these challenges all too well.

Working women have always had to make difficult choices to balance their careers and their families, but the pandemic has made these decisions nearly impossible. Women, especially women of color, are overrepresented in the industries that have been hit hardest by COVID-19, such as food service, retail, and health care.¹ In corporate America, as many as two million women are considering leaving the workforce, due to childcare responsibilities.² A longstanding lack of globally competitive family policy compounds some employers' reluctance to make necessary adjustments for working parents now.

In my time in Congress, I have been a staunch advocate for working parents because **strong family policy is also strong economic policy**. I firmly believe this crisis warrants immediate and aggressive action. Congress and the Administration must act now to support the safe reopening of childcare centers and schools, replace lost wages, support families, and make care more affordable and accessible. Employers must adjust their business models to accommodate the additional pressures women, and especially mothers, are experiencing in the workplace.

Without a response and recovery effort that focuses on women and families, the glaring disparities between men and women in the workplace are likely to deepen and last for generations. **To restore our economy and maximize our economic potential, we need a recovery plan that supports working women and families.**

Very Truly Yours,



Congresswoman Katie Porter

December 8, 2020

¹ National Bureau of Economic Research, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality," Titan Alon et al., NBER Working Paper Series, no. 26947, April 2020, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26947/w26947.pdf.

² McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org, "Women in the Workplace 2020; Corporate America is at a Critical Crossroads," Rachel Thomas et al., September 2020, https://wiw-report.s3.amazonaws.com/Women_in_the_Workplace_2020.pdf.

Women at Work: In the Office and at Home

Before the coronavirus pandemic, there were more women in the workforce than ever before, but progress was uneven across socioeconomic groups and industries. **At the end of 2019 women held the majority of all jobs in America (excluding farm workers and the self-employed) for the first time in almost a decade.**³ However, this employment growth primarily occurred in the service industry, specifically health care and retail jobs with long hours and poor benefits.⁴ These numbers also belie the fact that the “labor force participation rate for many groups of women is still lower than that of men,” and women are relatively more likely than men to be limited to part-time employment.⁵

“2019 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that working women average more than 3 hours per day of household work and childcare compared to just 2.5 hours for unemployed men.”

Women typically bear the brunt of the physical and emotional labor involved in running a home and managing childcare in addition to their professional responsibilities.⁶ **While men are increasingly involved in the home in two-parent households, even in families where the father is unemployed or has chosen to be a stay-at-home dad men still do less housework and childcare than women who work outside of the home.**⁷ 2019 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that working women average more than 3 hours per day of household work and childcare compared to just 2.5 hours for unemployed men.⁸ According to the Pew Research Center, men view themselves as sharing home responsibilities equally, whereas women perceive that the balance of the work is heavily skewed towards them.⁹ Another study found that men feel they are contributing

equally to household labor when they complete 35 percent of all tasks, while women feel like they are contributing equitably when they are doing 65 percent of the work.¹⁰ **Single mothers are forced to shoulder this entire burden.**

Nonetheless, single mothers were moving into the workforce at an increasing rate prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Some attributed this to a weak federal safety net that forced women to

³ TIME, “Women Are Now the Majority of the U.S. Workforce — But Working Women Still Face Serious Challenges,” Tara Law, January 16, 2020, <https://time.com/5766787/women-workforce>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Working Mother, “Chore Wars: A New Working Mother Report Reveals Not Much Has Changed at Home,” Interview with Brigid Schulte and Tom Bowman, April 17, 2015, <https://www.workingmother.com/content/chore-wars-new-working-mother-%20report-reveals-not-much-has-changed-home>.

⁷ Pew Research Center, “8 Facts about American Dads,” Gretchen Livingston and Kim Parker, June 12, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/12/fathers-day-facts/>.

⁸ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Time spent in primary activities for the civilian population 18 years and over by presence and age of youngest household child and sex, 2019 annual averages, not employed,” June 25, 2020, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.toc.htm>

⁹ Pew Research Center, “Who does more at home when both parents work? Depends on which one you ask,” Juliana Menasce Horowitz, November 5, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/05/who-does-more-at-home-when-both-parents-work-depends-on-which-one-you-ask>.

¹⁰ The Riveter, “The ‘Mental Load’ of Single Working Parenthood,” Rachel Sklar, September 11, 2019, <https://theriveter.co/voice/the-mental-load-of-single-working-parenthood/>.

work regardless of other responsibilities.¹¹ Others credited more progressive paid leave and minimum wage policies in some localities, such as California.¹² It appears a key factor was a labor market that would readily accept young, single mothers with less education, regardless of race or geography.¹³ Roughly 85 percent of single mothers aged 25–34 without a college degree were working as of 2018, up five points from 2014, and only slightly below the proportion of college-educated, working single mothers. However, employment numbers alone do not tell the full story; much of the new employment among single mothers was in the nursing, health care, retail, and food jobs with low pay and minimal benefits.

The Waning Women Workforce

While our economy was moving in a more equitable direction, the coronavirus pandemic and ensuing economic crisis are now erasing decades of progress and intensifying the disparities between men and women across all sectors and demographics, particularly when it comes to childcare and family responsibilities. Since the start of the pandemic, 22 percent of all women have left the workforce.¹⁴ Job losses remain concentrated in industries with the greatest proportion of women in the workforce, especially women of color.¹⁵ Nine of the ten industries that saw the most jobs lost are in the service sector, including women-dominated professions such as performing arts, sightseeing, hotels, and retail.¹⁶ As a result, mothers experienced greater initial increases in unemployment as compared to fathers. Economists and labor experts are concerned that many of these jobs will not return, as restaurants and entertainment venues close their doors permanently and retailers reconsider brick and mortar locations.¹⁷ The healthcare

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¹¹ Urban Institute, “The Nature of Work and the Social Safety Net,” Pamela Loprest and Demetra Nightingale, July 2018, https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/98812/the_nature_of_work_adn_the_social_safety_net.pdf

¹² *The New York Times*, “Single Mothers Are Surging Into the Work Force,” Claire Cain Miller and Ernie Tedeschi, May 29, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/upshot/single-mothers-surge-employment.html>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Bipartisan Policy Center and Morning Consult, “Impact of COVID-19 on the Workforce,” October 2020, https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Oct-2020-BPC-Impact-Of-COVID-On-Workforce-Analysis_-D2.pdf.

¹⁵ National Women's Law Center (NWLC), “Four Times More Women Than Men Dropped Out of the Labor Force in September,” Claire Ewing-Nelson, October 2020, <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/september-jobs-fs1.pdf>.

¹⁶ *The Washington Post*, “The covid-19 recession is the most unequal in modern U.S. history,” Heather Long, Andrew Van Dam, Alyssa Fowers and Leslie Shapiro, September 30, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/business/coronavirus-recession-equality/>.

¹⁷ *The Washington Post*, “As permanent economic damage piles up, the Covid Crisis is looking more like the Great Recession,” Andrew Van Dam, August 25, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/08/25/permanent-economic-damage-piles-up-covid-crisis-is-looking-more-like-great-recession/>.

industry also lost 1.4 million jobs due to the reduction in elective and routine procedures; however, unlike in other sectors, these jobs are slowly returning.¹⁸

This is reflected in the data, which shows **women returning to the workforce more slowly than men, and many women being forced from the workforce altogether.**¹⁹ Of the nearly 22.2 million jobs the U.S. initially lost in March and April, just over half have been recovered.²⁰ Women only account for 43.3 percent jobs recovered, even though they make up 49.7 percent of the workforce. These trends are especially pronounced among Black and Latina women, whose unemployment rates remain several percentage points higher than women overall. According to a *Washington Post* analysis of August employment data, white women have recovered 61 percent of the jobs they lost in the early months of the pandemic, whereas Black women have recovered only 34 percent.²¹

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Women with disabilities have also been especially hard hit. Many, especially those who worked in frontline professions and may qualify as high risk for severe coronavirus infections, are unable to return to the workplace. Researchers recently found that nearly 16 percent of workers who took leave in the past 12 months “may have done so for a disability, taking medical leave for an ongoing health condition.” Women and Black workers were a disproportionately high number of these employees.²²

Single mothers also need a dramatic recovery to return to pre-pandemic employment levels. **Employment levels for single mothers were 22 percent lower in April 2020 than in April 2019,** compared to 9 percent lower for moms in two-parent homes.²³

¹⁸ CNBC, “Hardest-hit industries: Nearly half the leisure and hospitality jobs were lost in April,” Thomas Franck, May 8, 2020, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/05/08/these-industries-suffered-the-biggest-job-losses-in-april-2020.html>.

¹⁹ *The Washington Post*, September 30, Op. cit.

²⁰ NWLC, op cit.

²¹ *The Washington Post*, September 30, Op. cit.

²² Center for American Progress, “The Disability Community Needs Paid Family and Medical Leave,” Diana Boesch and Rebecca Cokley, October 27, 2020, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/disability/news/2020/10/27/492351/disability-community-needs-paid-family-medical-leave/>.

²³ Pew Charitable Trusts, “Single Mothers Hit Hard by Job Losses,” Tim Henderson, May 26, 2020, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2020/05/26/single-mothers-hit-hard-by-job-losses>.

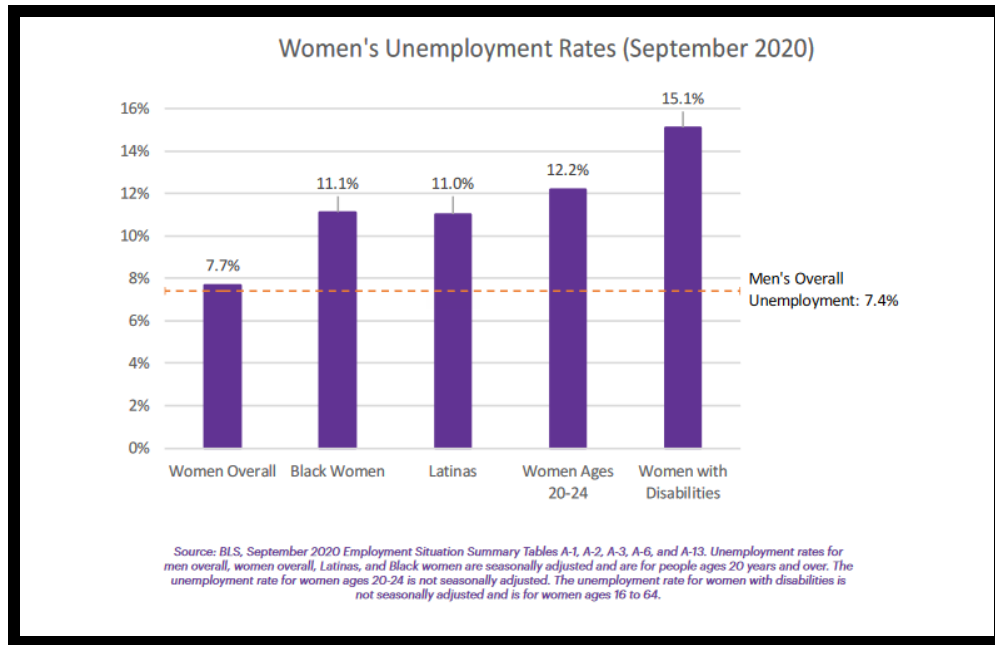


Fig 1. Women's Unemployment Rates (September 2020).²⁴

As the crisis wears on, more women are being forced to make these impossible choices. **Of the more than 1.1 million workers who were forced out of their jobs in September, 865,000 (80.0%) were women, including 324,000 Latinas and 58,000 Black women.**²⁵ Mothers were more likely than fathers to reduce their work hours, take a leave of absence from work, transition to part time employment, or take other measures to reduce their work time and commitment.²⁶ According to one study, 42 percent of women with children under the age of two have been forced from the workforce during the pandemic.²⁷

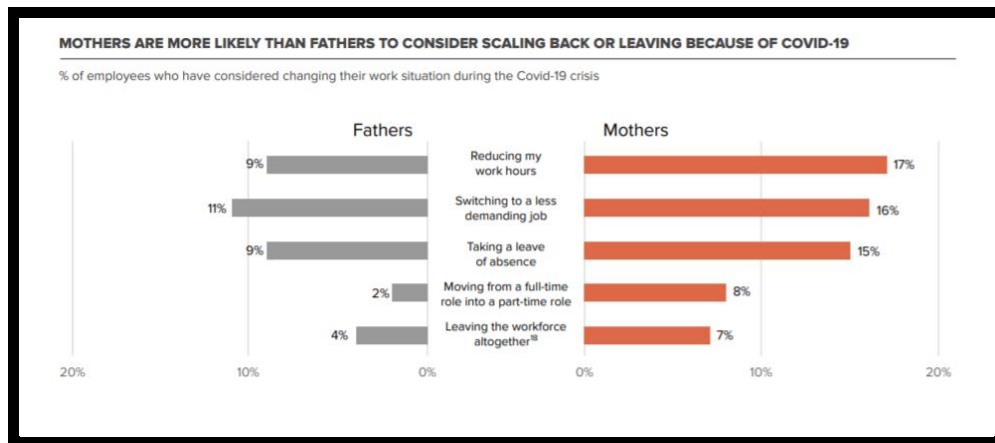


Fig. 2 McKinsey & Co. and LeanIn.org found mothers are more likely than fathers to consider scaling back or leaving because of COVID-19.²⁸

²⁴ NWLC, Op. cit.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ McKinsey, Op. cit.

²⁷ Bipartisan Policy Center, Op. Cit.

²⁸ Ibid.

Lack of support from both government and employers for balancing work, home, and childcare responsibilities is pushing women out of the labor force. **The support system that previously made full-time work and childcare possible for women has been upended.** As of April, 60 percent of licensed childcare providers were closed, with reduced hours at those that are still operating.²⁹ And, with an estimated 52 percent of U.S. elementary and high school students going to school online full-time, childcare responsibilities now also include helping kids with online classes.³⁰ **According to one study, mothers in states where schools shut down this spring were 68.8 percent more likely to take time off from work than mothers in states where schools were still open. School closures had no effect on whether fathers or women without children were working.**³¹ In total, from February to April, women with young children reduced their work hours four to five times more than fathers, leading to 20–50 percent growth in the overall gender gap in work hours.³²

The Crisis in Corporate America

Women in corporate America are also being forced to play the role of both parent and employee during work hours, and according to a recent study, **1-in-3 mothers in corporate jobs are considering leaving the workforce.** The study also found that mothers are more than three times as likely as fathers to be responsible for most of the housework and caregiving during the pandemic. Indeed, **mothers are 1.5 times more likely than fathers to be spending an additional three or more hours a day on housework and childcare**—equivalent to 20 hours a week, or a part-time job.³³

The pandemic compounded long standing biases about mothers and their performance and commitment to their jobs. The study found that **mothers are more likely than fathers to worry that their performance is being negatively judged due to their simultaneous caregiving responsibilities.**³⁴ Mothers are also less like to rely on their colleagues for support or confide in them about the challenges they're facing. Despite these issues, the study found that **less than a third of companies have adjusted performance reviews**

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²⁹ Center for American Progress, "Coronavirus Pandemic Could Lead to Permanent Loss of Nearly 4.5 Million Child Care Slots," Steven Jessen-Howard and Simon Workman, April 24, 2020, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/news/2020/04/24/483817/coronavirus-pandemic-lead-permanent-loss-nearly-4-5-million-child-care-slots/>.

³⁰ CNBC, "Half of U.S. elementary and high school students will study virtually only this fall, study shows," Steve Liesman, August 11, 2020, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/11/half-of-us-elementary-and-high-school-students-will-study-virtually-only-this-fall-study-shows.html>.

³¹ Opportunity and Inclusive Growth Institute, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, "Why Is Mommy So Stressed? Estimating the Immediate Impact of the COVID-19 Shock on Parental Attachment to the Labor Market and the Double-Bind of Mothers," Misty Heggness, Revised October 2020, <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/institute/working-papers-institute/iwp33.pdf>.

³² Gender, Work & Organization, "COVID-19 and the gender gap in work hours," Caitlyn Collins et al., June 2020, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/gwao.12506>.

³³ McKinsey, Op. cit.

³⁴ McKinsey, Op. cit.

to account for the challenges created by the pandemic.³⁵ A generation of mothers may be forced out of corporate America due to this lack of support.

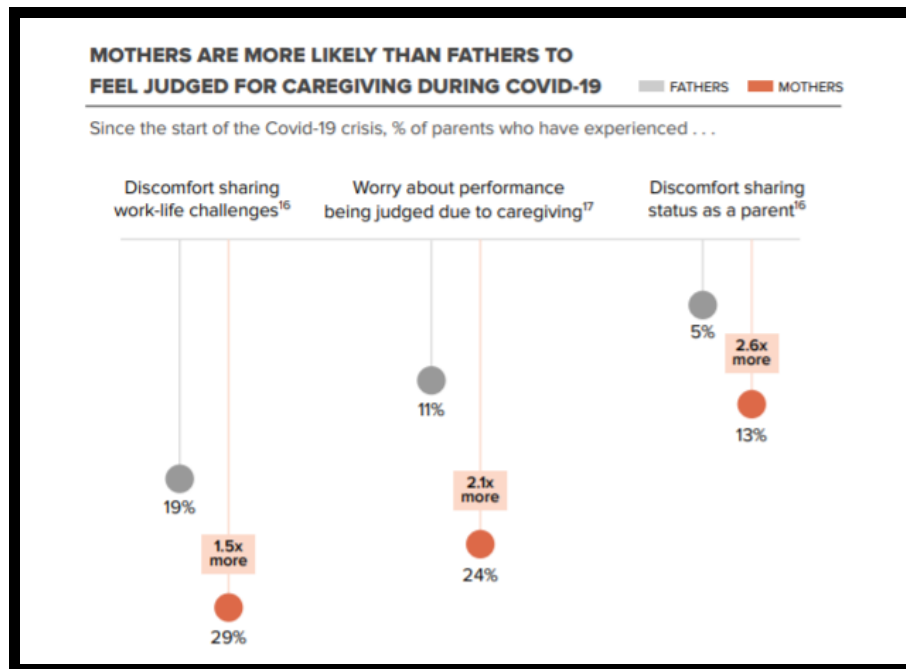


Fig 3. McKinsey & Co. and LeanIn.Org found mothers are more likely than fathers to feel judged for caregiving during COVID-19³⁶

Time for Change: Policy Solutions

Paid Leave and Unemployment Paid leave allows parents to take the time needed to care for a sick child or themselves, and it keeps our communities safer by reducing COVID-19 spread.³⁷ A paid leave program, as well as support for working parents facing closed childcare centers and schools, will help keep moms in the workforce both during and after the pandemic.

- **Support for Working Families Act** – I introduced this legislation with my colleague, Rep. Linda T. Sánchez, to support working parents. Under legislation signed into law in March 2020, workers can get assistance if they have to leave their jobs to serve as caregivers for children or other dependents whose schools or childcare facilities are closed due to COVID-19. This legislation clarifies that this covers families burdened by partial closings of care centers, substantial increases in the cost of dependent care, or health risks for the family. This legislation passed the House of Representatives as part of the *Heroes Act*.³⁸

³⁵ McKinsey, Op. cit.

³⁶ McKinsey, Op. cit.

³⁷ *Health Affairs*, “COVID-19 Emergency Sick Leave Has Helped Flatten The Curve In The United States,” Stefan Pichler, Katherine Wen, and Nicolas R. Ziebarth, October 15, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00863>.

³⁸ Rep. Porter Introduces Bill to Help Working Families during Pandemic, Rep. Katie Porter, Retrieved at: <https://porter.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=174>.

“Paid leave allows parents to take the time needed to care for a sick child or themselves, and it keeps our communities safer by reducing COVID-19 spread. A paid leave program, as well as support for working parents facing closed childcare centers and schools, will help keep moms in the workforce both during and after the pandemic.”

- **Providing Americans Insured Days of Leave Act (PAID Leave Act)** – Introduced by Reps. Rosa DeLauro and Ayanna Pressley, this legislation creates a plan for comprehensive emergency paid sick, family, and medical leave, fully funded by the federal government during this and future public health emergencies. This will provide additional financial support to our nation’s most vulnerable workers and businesses during public health emergencies.³⁹
- **Heroes Act** – The updated *Heroes Act*, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in October, expands emergency paid family, medical, and sick leave benefits to millions of workers, including health care workers and those employed by large companies, by eliminating exemptions that prevented workers from accessing emergency paid leave during a pandemic.⁴⁰

Childcare and Education In order to support women who can return to work, we need policies to help our schools and childcare facilities reopen safely. We also need to work to make childcare more affordable for working families, including providing free or subsidized pre-kindergarten programs.⁴¹

- **Free Pre-Kindergarten Programs** – President-Elect Joe Biden has put forward a plan that includes free pre-kindergarten programs for children ages 3 and 4 years old.⁴² Preschool attendance has been shown to improve children’s academic and socio-emotional skills—providing this opportunity benefits both our nation’s kids and working parents.⁴³

³⁹ Office of Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, “Rep. Pressley & Rep. DeLauro Introduce Bicameral Emergency Paid Leave Legislation In Response to Worsening COVID-19 Crisis,” April 3, 2020, <https://pressley.house.gov/media/press-releases/rep-pressley-rep-delauro-introduce-bicameral-emergency-paid-leave-legislation>.

⁴⁰ Updated Heroes Act, Education and Labor, Retrieved at: <https://edlabor.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2020-09-28%20Heroes%20Act%202.0%20-%20Education%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf> and Heroes Act, Labor Fact Sheet, Retrieved at: <https://edlabor.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2020-05-12%20Heroes%20Act%20-%20Labor%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

⁴¹ *The New York Times*, Op. Cit.

⁴² *The Washington Post*, “Biden unveils \$775 billion plan for universal preschool, child care and elder care,” Annie Linsky and Matt Viser, July 21, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/biden-to-unveil-775-billion-plan-for-universal-preschool-child-care-and-elder-care/2020/07/20/e273dabc-cae7-11ea-91f1-28aca4d833a0_story.html.

⁴³ Brookings Institution, “Puzzling It Out: The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects,” Deborah Phillips, et al., 2017, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/consensus-statement_final.pdf.

“In order to support women who can return to work, we need policies to help our schools and childcare facilities reopen safely. We also need to work to make childcare more affordable for working families, including providing free or subsidized pre-kindergarten programs.”

- **Funding for Childcare** – On July 29, the House of Representatives passed the *Child Care for Economic Recovery Act* and the *Child Care Is Essential Act* to provide relief to childcare providers struggling to stay open, or to reopen, during the pandemic. These two bills would make an enormous and necessary investment in the childcare sector. The Senate has yet to act on this legislation.⁴⁴

- **Child Care for Working Families Act** – I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation, introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott, which would mandate that no family under 150 percent of state median income pays more than 7 percent of their income on childcare. Families would pay for care on a sliding scale. The bill also supports compensation and training for the childcare workforce to ensure that our nation’s caregivers have the support they need to help children learn and grow.⁴⁵

- **Family Savings for Kids and Seniors** – I introduced this bipartisan legislation to increase the amount that families can put into Dependent Care Flexible Savings Accounts (FSAs). Under current law, families can put

up to \$5,000 of pre-tax income into Dependent Care FSAs. This limit has not been changed since 1986. The *Family Savings for Kids and Seniors Act* would adjust the limit to account for inflation. **If this legislation had been enacted for 2019, families could have set aside \$11,300 of pre-tax income to pay for dependent care. An analysis conducted by the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network found that the average cost to send a preschooler to a childcare center in Orange County, California is \$10,750 per year.** The annual cost for an infant averages over \$15,000.⁴⁶ Increasing this amount is critical to making childcare more affordable.

- **Guidance for schools and funding for schools to safely reopen** – In July, my colleague, Senator Kamala Harris, and I wrote to the Centers for Disease Control and Preparedness Director Robert Redfield and the Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos requesting that they immediately issue scientific, evidence-based guidelines for schools to reopen.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, this guidance has still not been provided. Regardless, our schools need funding to reopen their doors, maintain their staff, and keep everyone safe. The House passed the updated *Heroes Act* in October, which includes \$436 billion in emergency

⁴⁴ House passes set of bills that give child care industry a more than \$60 billion bailout, CNBC, Retrieved at: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/29/house-passes-bailout-for-child-care-industry.html>

⁴⁵ House and Senate Democrats Introduce Comprehensive Child Care and Early Learning Bill to Ensure Child Care for All, Education and Labor Committee, Retrieved at: <https://edlabor.house.gov/media/press-releases/house-and-senate-democrats-introduce-comprehensive-child-care-and-early-learning-bill-to-ensure-child-care-for-all>

⁴⁶ Office of Congresswoman Katie Porter, “Rep. Porter Introduces Bipartisan Legislation to Make Childcare More Affordable,” March 28, 2019, <https://porter.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=34>.

⁴⁷ Office of Congresswoman Katie Porter, “Letter to Secretaries DeVos and Azar and Commissioner Redfield from Rep. Porter and Sen. Harris,” July 9, 2020, https://porter.house.gov/uploadedfiles/letter_to_ed_hhs_re_reopening_guidance_for_schools_7_9_20.pdf.

funding for state and local governments that are facing budget shortfalls that could lead to mass teacher layoffs and deep cuts to public education. It also provides nearly \$175 billion for K-12 schools to safely deliver instruction.⁴⁸

- **Funding for Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) Program** – In July, I fought for increased funding for CCAMPIS, which helps low-income parents attend college by providing campus-based childcare services.

Employer Actions

- **Adjust Performance Reviews** – Employers should adjust performance reviews and compensation to accurately reflect the extraordinary burdens placed on women during this time.
- **Safe Workplaces** – Employers should provide and maintain safe workplaces as they rehire, reopen or increase operations, following the specific recommendations of the CDC and OSHA (noted above) and other recommendations from local and state health departments.
- **Paid Leave** – Employers should continue providing emergency paid sick days and paid family and medical leave measures, as well as increased flexibility measures, to re-hired workers throughout the duration of the pandemic.
- **Accommodations** – Employers should provide employees with disabilities accommodations to allow them to continue working throughout the pandemic.

Conclusion

Our failure to protect access to good jobs for women and working mothers is causing long term damage to our economy. **According to a 2017 study, if women entered and remained in the workforce at a pace in line with that of Norway, the U.S. economy would be \$1.6 trillion larger than it is today.**⁴⁹ A 19-year study of 215 companies found a strong correlation between companies hiring women executives and increasing their profitability.⁵⁰ These companies benefit from the fact that women bring different perspectives to problems than do their male counterparts and often have a more collaborative approach to developing relationships and solving problems.⁵¹ Yet of all U.S. Fortune 500 CEOs, just 7.4 percent are women, and only one-in-five C-suite executives.^{52,53}

⁴⁸ House Committee on Education and Labor, Majority, “House Democrats Release Updated Version of The Heroes Act,” September 28, 2020, <https://edlabor.house.gov/media/press-releases/house-democrats-release-updated-version-of-the-heroes-act>.

⁴⁹ S&P Global, “The Key to Unlocking U.S. GDP Growth? Women,” Beth Ann Bovino and Jason Gold, 2017, https://www.spglobal.com/Media/Documents/03651.00_Women_at_Work_Doc.8.5x11-R4.pdf.

⁵⁰ Harvard Business Review, “Women in the Executive Suite Correlate to Higher Profits,” Roy Adler, January 2001, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267822127_Women_in_the_Executive_Suite_Correlate_to_High_Profits.

⁵¹ KPMG, “KPMG Women’s Leadership Study: Moving Women Forward into Leadership Roles,” 2015, <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/ph/pdf/ThoughtLeadershipPublications/KPMGWomensLeadershipStudy.pdf>

⁵² CNN Business, “Female Fortune 500 CEOs reach an all-time high, but it’s still a small percentage,” Alisha Ebrahimi, May 20, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/20/us/fortune-500-women-ceos-trnd/index.html>.

⁵³ CNN Business, “It’s 2019 and just one in five C-suite executives is a woman” Jeanne Sahadi, October 15, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/15/success/gender-gap-women-at-work/index.html>.

It is imperative, not just for women's advancement in society but also for our economy, that women enter the workforce to offset retiring baby boomers—especially now that the coronavirus is driving many older Americans into an early retirement.⁵⁴

Commonsense, bipartisan policies can help women continue to work, but we need to act now. As the only single mother of young children in Congress, I am happy to join my colleagues, especially many of my freshmen peers, in fighting for these policies. It's time for employers to do the same.

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⁵⁴ CBS News, "The coronavirus is driving Americans into retirement," Megan Cerullo, August 4, 2020, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/older-workers-retirement-coronavirus-fears-workplace-covid-19/>.