



February 3, 2021

Sent via e-mail

RE: Extension and Expansion of FFCRA Leave for Postal and Federal Workers

Dear Member of Congress:

The Federal-Postal Coalition is an alliance of more than 30 national member organizations that collectively represent more than five million federal and postal workers, retirees and their dependents across the country. The undersigned members of the coalition write to highlight the immediate need to renew the leave provisions provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and expand them to all federal workers.

Recognizing the dire threat COVID-19 has placed on public health, in March 2020, Congress passed the FFCRA, which provided fully covered employees:

- Two weeks of sick leave at regular pay for workers experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or who were required to quarantine because of close exposure to the infection.
- Two weeks of sick leave at 2/3 pay to care for another individual affected by COVID-19.
- An additional 10 weeks of family leave at 2/3 pay to care for a child whose school or childcare provider was closed due to COVID-19.

The program was a success and greatly improved the health of the American public. According to an academic [study](#)¹, allowing sick people to stay home and quarantine prevented 400 COVID-19 cases per day per state, or more than 15,000 cases per day nationwide. Unfortunately, Congress never expanded the extended family leave benefit, allowing for 10 weeks of partially paid leave for child care, to most federal employees. And while the pandemic rages on, Congress allowed these emergency leave benefits to expire on December 31, 2020, putting millions of American workers, including the essential postal workforce, at greater risk.

The Federal-Postal Coalition urges you to immediately and retroactively renew this lifesaving program, and to build upon its success. Specifically, in addition to renewing the program retroactively, we urge you to:

- **Extend critical benefits of sick and family leave to all federal workers.** Unfortunately, the family leave provisions of the FFCRA did not apply to most federal employees. It also allowed federal agencies to exclude health care providers and emergency responders from any of the leave. This is counterproductive as these workers are at serious risk of contracting COVID-19 in the course of their work or when traveling to or from work.

¹ Pichler, Stefan, Wen, Katherine, & Ziebarth, Nicholas. (2020). COVID-19 Emergency Sick Leave Has Helped Flatten the Curve in the United States. *Health Affairs* (vol. 39, no. 12) 2197- 2204.
<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/pdf/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00863>.



- **Provide parity to all federal workers.** The FFCRA did not recognize federal employees who regularly work uncommon work hours. Numbers of high-risk federal employees, such as fire fighters, are normally scheduled up to 144 hours, well in excess of the 80 hours provided by FFCRA, during each two calendar week pay period. FFCRA must be renewed and authorize full coverage to employees working uncommon work hours and retroactively correct the reduced coverage experienced by employees working uncommon work hours.
- **Provide adequate funding to the Postal Service to support FFCRA leave.** A technical error in the original legislation left USPS liable for the expenses associated with FFCRA leave. Unlike its private and public sector counterparts which received full tax credits or funding to compensate for the expense, USPS did not receive funding.

With FFCRA leave provisions expired, American workers now face an even greater risk of contracting COVID-19 as many workers may not have the financial resources to take leave without pay. The Biden Administration has already showed its support for the extension of sick and family leave. Under President Biden's relief plan, federal and postal workers would have continued access to two weeks of paid sick leave for those unable to work due to COVID-19, as well as 14 weeks of partial paid family leave to care for a dependent impacted by COVID-19.

The Federal-Postal Coalition urges you to take decisive action and immediately renew this critical lifesaving program, and make the revisions outlined above to ensure the program's maximum efficiency. Should you have any questions, please contact the Federal-Postal Coalition Chair, John Hatton at jhatton@narfe.org, or Vice-Chair, Katie Maddocks at kmaddocks@npmhu.org.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)
American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)
American Postal Workers Union (APWU)
Federal Managers Association (FMA)
International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys (NAAUSA)
National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV)
National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC)
National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA)
National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)
National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU)
National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA)
National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU)
National Weather Service Employees Organization (NWSEO)
Patent Office Professional Association (POPA)



Professional Managers Association (PMA)
Senior Executives Association (SEA)