



NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office

Lee Harris, Mayor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COALITION OF STAKEHOLDERS FORMS TO FIGHT EFFORT TO CUT PAID SICK
AND PARENTAL LEAVE FOR SHELBY COUNTY EMPLOYEES; COALITION
DELIVERS LETTER TO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

[COALITION PAID SICK AND PARENTAL LEAVE SUPPORT LETTER](#)

MEMPHIS, TN – Memphis AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, faith leaders, community activists, stakeholders, and elected officials collaborate to fight effort to cut funding for flexible paid sick leave and paid parental leave for Shelby County government employees from the FY2021 budget. Today, the group announced that it would submit a letter to the Shelby County Board of Commissioners respectfully asking for their public commitment to keep these crucial benefits in the FY2021 budget.

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris: “To reduce the spread of viruses, like COVID-19, we encourage employees to stay home when they are feeling ill. However, without policies, like sick leave and paid parental leave, employees cannot afford to stay sick or stay home to care for a loved one. Working families should not have to choose between their job and taking care of their health or the health of a family member. Paid sick leave and parental leave policies should not be put in jeopardy in this budget process. We should not balance our budget on the back of employee benefits.”

Shelby County Circuit Court Clerk Temiika Gipson: “Paid parental leave allows both parents the opportunity to bond with their newborn without having to worry about depleting their annual time or taking unpaid leave. Funding the paid parental leave policy will keep our employees from having to choose between building a nurturing relationship with the new addition to their family and keeping their job. To ensure that our employees do not have to make decisions between their job and their family, we are respectfully asking the Board of Commissioners to keep the paid parental benefits in the FY2021 budget.”

Elizabeth Gedmark, Vice President and Director of A Better Balance Southern Office: “A Better Balance has long pushed for paid family leave protections nationwide. We were glad to see the Shelby County Commission adopt the County’s first paid parental leave policy earlier this year. When paid parental leave is not an option, workers who are expecting a new child may be forced to choose between coming to work sick or using precious paid time off they were hoping to save for when their child arrives. Paid parental leave should not be on the chopping block, especially during a global pandemic.”

James E. Jones, President/Principal Officer of Teamsters Local 667: “When we look at the struggle to achieve a balanced budget, we must compare the protection against every day challenges to the cost of a once a year fee. The working community understands that there is a cost to unforeseen circumstances. They would prefer to pay a minimal yearly fee to protect their families against the unknown. In this uncertain time, we are forced to understand the importance of a benefits package to cover the situations that we are not properly prepared for. We cannot justifiably strip the workforce of security. This is the time to fortify their protections and maintain the well-being of every family’s financial security.”

(end of release)

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