

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

June 15, 2022

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building

Dear Chairman Neal,

Thank you for convening this hearing on what working women need for a stronger economy.

Under President Biden, working women haven't had it this bad in decades. And with a looming recession, real wages shrinking, and even higher gas prices ahead, it looks to be getting worse.

Republicans are ready to work with Democrats to find common ground on an issue everyone can agree on – improving the lives of working families. Unfortunately, we have found little opportunity to do that work.

Democrats' go-it-alone approach and reckless spending has made life harder for American families and delayed solutions for working women. As inflation continues to outpace wages, American families are facing the largest pay cut in 40 years, 84 percent of Americans are anxiously squeezing their dollars.

According to Moody's, American households are paying \$460 more per month to buy the same amount of goods and services. Gas prices have more than doubled since Biden has been in office. AAA reported the national average price for a gallon of gas jumped above \$5 for the first time ever, \$2 more than a year ago.

Affordable child care and paid family leave policies are only part of the solution to the problems working women face. Working moms are concerned about high prices, empty grocery shelves, and feeding their families.

Last year, Committee Republicans offered to work with Democrats and offered a commonsense alternative with flexible options in the *Protecting Worker Paychecks and Family Choice Act*.

Republicans created paid family and medical leave benefits in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act—our discussion draft expands this to be more inclusive for small employers, improves flexibility for families using dependent care flexible spending accounts, creates new family savings accounts, and paves the way for pooling and cost sharing for small business—all of which strengthen choice and lower costs.

Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, under our proposal, parents get to choose the child care that best fits their children's needs and targets existing funding to states with higher concentrations of children in poverty.

Finally, our proposal expands access to child care and paid leave by targeting gaps in coverage, including low-income families and low-wage workers who are least likely to receive paid leave benefits through their employers. And it empowers job creators by relying on proven policies that give workers in the 21st century flexibility at their jobs.

Yet, instead of working with Republicans, Democrats' chose a partisan approach that has made life harder for working women.

Democrats continue to point the finger at Republicans for "blocking" proposals on child care and paid leave. If Democrats worked with Republicans, we could have had a solution by now.

Democrats' vision for paid family and medical leave is a one-size-fits-all, Washington controlled federal program that treats every worker and family's situation as the same. Washington control means lower paychecks, fewer jobs, and less choice for families.

Republicans' approach to child care and paid leave puts families and Main Street businesses first, not Washington.

We all know working families face many obstacles when balancing the demands of work with their needs at home. The question is how we solve these challenges.

Members of this Committee have an opportunity to work together to make it easier to balance the competing demands of work and family life.

We look forward to continuing this discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Brady". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Kevin Brady
Republican Leader
Committee on Ways and Means