

# A Better Balance

Fighting for Justice &  
Fairness for Working Families

*2017 Highlights*



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If not for ABB we would not be here today. You have been my guiding star, the experts that enlightened every step of the way, the key architects of the bill and the negotiators who brought business into agreement and developed the negotiated language.

— Liz Friedman, Advocate for Massachusetts Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

# IN THE LEGISLATURE

**Paid leave is critical for workers to be able to care for their families, maintain their income and keep their jobs. We've fought tirelessly to make sure workers can take paid time off when they need to care for their loved ones and there are now 40 jurisdictions including 8 states that require paid sick days for all workers. This year, thanks to A Better Balance:**

## **400,000 Plus**

### **Workers in Rhode Island Now Have Paid Sick Time**

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The law A Better Balance drafted and helped pass in Rhode Island this year will allow workers job-protected time off to care for themselves or a loved one when sick and to address safety needs related to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

## **3.4 Million**

### **New York City Workers Can Take Paid Time To Get Safe**

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Workers received an important new right when we successfully added "safe time" for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or trafficking to New York City's paid sick time law.

## **10 Million**

### **Workers Can Take Time for All Close Loved Ones**

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Two states and five localities including the nation's largest cities, define time off for family to include "chosen family" – loved ones who aren't biologically or legally related but who really are family. This recognition is especially important for LGBTQ families, immigrants, veterans and older adults.

## **65,000 Soon to be Millions**

### **NYC Workers Now Have A Fair Work Week and NY State Workers Soon Will**

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New York City passed a groundbreaking package of bills to tackle abusive scheduling practices for fast food and retail workers, and the state has issued rules that would protect most workers throughout New York from the uncertainty of unpredictable and unfair schedules.



**Even though pregnancy discrimination has been illegal in this country for 39 years, we still see far too many pregnant workers forced to choose between their health and their incomes. Thanks to ABB:**

## **1 Million**

**Women in Massachusetts Will Be Protected When They're Pregnant**

In Massachusetts, we worked with local advocates and lawmakers to get support from the business community, providing protections to one million women.

## **Four States**

**Now Have Stronger Protections for Pregnant Women**

Thanks to our efforts this year, four new states—Vermont, Massachusetts, Nevada, and Washington—passed stronger legal protections for pregnant workers. This brings us to a total of 23 states, including Washington, D.C., with stronger pregnancy discrimination protections.

**Although federal civil rights laws have helped narrow the wage gap over time, unequal pay remains pervasive, especially for mothers and women of color. Thanks to ABB:**

## **3.8 Million**

**New York City Workers Have Stronger Equal Pay Protections**

In New York City, ABB successfully worked to pass groundbreaking legislation to ban employers from asking job applicants for prior salary information, removing a significant barrier to equal pay for women and people of color.

*In 2017, A Better Balance worked on legislation in*  
**36 states**



**The rights of women, people of color, immigrants, refugees, and LGBTQ people are under attack. The Trump Administration has made clear that they will not enforce federal civil rights laws and will continue to roll back hard-fought victories.**

### ***Supporting Pregnant Workers at Walmart***

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We filed a national class action lawsuit on behalf of **thousands** of pregnant workers discriminated against by Walmart. We won't stop until no pregnant worker in America has to choose between her job and a healthy pregnancy.

### ***Landmark Win in Florence, Kentucky***

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The city of Florence, Kentucky agreed to overhaul its policies to ensure that pregnant workers are treated fairly and equally in the workplace. The city's groundbreaking policy sends a powerful message: pregnant workers must not be penalized for starting a family.

### ***Taking on Kroger in the South***

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Our pregnancy discrimination lawsuit against Kroger is ongoing. We are fighting alongside our client to ensure that no pregnant worker has to risk her health on the job when a modest accommodation would allow her to earn critical income.

### ***Fighting Absence Control***

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We published a landmark report, "*Pointing Out: How Walmart Unlawfully Punishes Workers for Medical Absences.*" The report, featured in *The New York Times*, is based on a survey of **more than 1,000** current and former Walmart workers and reveals how Walmart's absence control system harms workers, and often costs them their job. ABB has filed charges of discrimination for five clients to fight back against this illegal practice.

### ***Defending Laws We've Passed***

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We fought back – and won – when conservative forces sought to overturn the victory at the ballot box for paid sick days in Arizona and tried to stop the Minneapolis paid sick days law from going into effect. Now, over 2.3 million workers in Arizona and 329,000 workers in Minneapolis have paid sick time.



# IN THE COURTS



**Pointing Out:** How Walmart Unlawfully Punishes Workers for Medical Absences



**a better balance**  
The Work and Family Rights Center

June 2017

# IN YOUR CORNER



## 450 Plus

### Individuals Helped

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People call us when they need resources to advocate for their rights in their workplace, a free lawyer to help them get their job back after taking sick time, or when they have been illegally pushed out of the workplace. This year we helped **more than 450 people** from across the country who called our free legal hotline, in both English and Spanish.

## 10,000 Plus

### Municipal Workers in Nashville Have Paid Family Leave

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Through our leadership on the Mayor's Council on Gender Equity we were able to ensure a generous paid family leave program for Nashville municipal workers.

## Helping Thousands

### to Know Their Rights

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We have distributed thousands of educational materials and seen a huge increase in people accessing our website and online resources. And we have directly educated **hundreds** of workers, service providers, other lawyers and healthcare providers about the rights of working families.

## 5.6 Million

### New Yorkers Will Have Paid Family Leave

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In 2016 we passed the strongest paid family leave bill in the nation. It goes into effect on January 1, 2018. In preparation, A Better Balance launched the **Family Leave Works** campaign to ensure all New Yorkers know their rights under this new program.

## Building Activism

### on the Energy of the Women's March

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We teamed up with the **Women's March Alliance** to host an interactive training on how to become an effective advocate for women in the workplace. Our team of attorneys explained how federal, state and local laws impact women in the workplace and shared tools on how to become a champion for advancing policies that help working families.

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If you have a question or problem at work because of your pregnancy, caregiving responsibilities, or because you need paid leave, A Better Balance has your back.





## ***Client Victory: Helping Pregnant Workers Fight Unfair Treatment***

Luisa\* worked in a supermarket in New York City, making \$10.50 an hour. When her employer found out she was pregnant, they ridiculed her for having another baby soon after her first. They began cutting her hours and penalized her for taking breaks.

At four months pregnant, Luisa asked if she could avoid climbing ladders because of the risk of miscarriage from a fall. Human resources ignored her request. When she asked her direct supervisor, he said, "Why don't you just go on maternity leave and you can come back to work when you have the baby."

At seven months pregnant, Luisa was fired after requesting a change in her schedule to attend one prenatal appointment.

### **That's when Luisa called A Better Balance.**

After laying out the myriad legal violations the employer faced—including failing to provide her with reasonable pregnancy accommodations and earned sick time—the employer agreed to pay Luisa **\$22,500**.

We will continue to hold employers accountable when they discriminate against workers like Luisa.

*\*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*