

a better balance

Advancing justice for workers caring for themselves and their loved ones.



An Unprecedented Crisis of Care

2020 has been a year of unprecedented challenges. Across the country, so many of us are struggling to balance protecting our health, caring for our families, and staying afloat economically. The dual public health and economic crises have exacerbated longstanding inequalities, disproportionately affecting women, who are exiting the workforce at alarming rates as they shoulder caregiving responsibilities, as well as people of color, who are over-represented in low wage, frontline jobs and less likely to have access to basic workplace protections.

For nearly 15 years, A Better Balance has been dedicated to advancing justice for workers caring for themselves and their loved ones—and during this crisis of care, our work is more urgent than ever. Here's how your support in 2020 made a difference in the lives and livelihoods of workers and families nationwide.

Our Impact by the Numbers

With passage of a statewide paid sick time law in New York State, approximately **7 million workers** across New York City and New York State are now entitled to paid sick time.

Following our class action lawsuit against Walmart, we reached a historic **\$14 million settlement** providing relief for nearly **4,000 workers** who were denied pregnancy accommodations on the job.

We pushed the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act through the Tennessee legislature, which by some measures is the most conservative in the country, unanimously—meaning **30 states** now guarantee reasonable pregnancy accommodations.

In the courts, we successfully helped to defend the rights of **100,000 workers** in Minneapolis against state efforts to block the local paid sick time law.

Nearly **2.9 million workers** in Colorado now have a right to paid sick time and, through a historic ballot initiative, to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave.

We advised on emergency paid leave measures in **24 states**.

Our COVID-19 know-your-rights web resources **reached over half a million people**.

Our legal experts presented to over **10,000 advocates and supporters** across the country on topics like pregnancy discrimination, paid leave, childcare, and more.

ABB & our clients were featured in **100+ stories** in national and local print, web, and broadcast outlets.

Calls to our free legal helpline **tripled** in the last year and **quadrupled** over the summer due to COVID-19, enabling us to provide direct support to **approximately 3,000 workers**.

In the Media

By sharing our expertise in the media on a regular basis, we've been able to drive national conversation about the issues working families are facing today, share critical know-your-rights information with the public, and put public pressure on lawmakers to take action on the laws we need. Here are just a few headlines from this year...

TIME

These 16 People and Groups Are Fighting for a More Equal America, *TIME Magazine*, 2/20/2020

The New York Times Parenting

What Rights Do Pregnant Workers Have in a Pandemic?, *New York Times Parenting*, 5/1/2020



Mothers Are 3 Times More Likely Than Fathers to Have Lost Jobs in Pandemic, *Pew Stateline*, 9/28/2020

Vox

"I am very scared": What it's like for pregnant essential workers in the pandemic, *Vox*, 6/15/2020

Los Angeles Times

What to Do When You've Been Laid Off from Your Service Job, *Food & Wine*, 3/25/2020

Reckon

The South still lags U.S. on paying women fairly, *Reckon*, 10/2/2020

The New York Times

How to Prepare for Your Return to the Office, *New York Times*, 8/8/2020

THE Nation.

For the First Time Ever, the House Has Passed the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, *The Nation*, 9/17/2020

Bloomberg Law

Paid Sick Leave Gaps Draw States' Attention as Virus Persists, *Bloomberg Law*, 8/6/2020

MOTHERLY

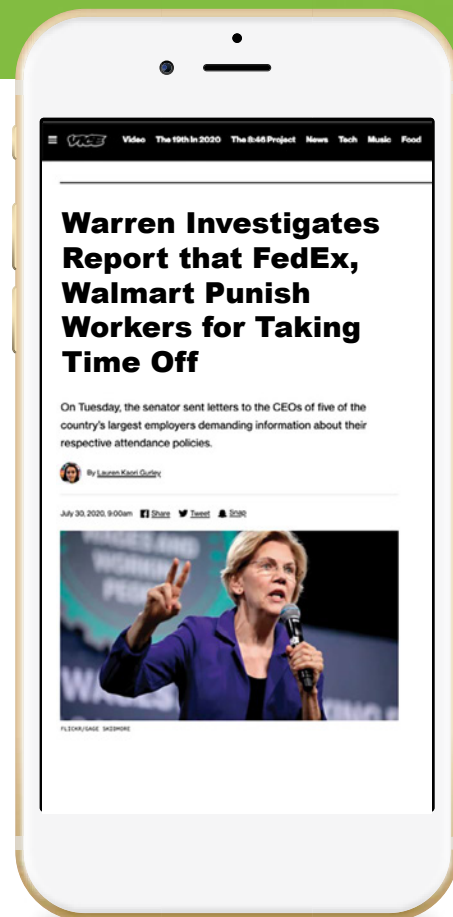
What you need to know about taking maternity leave during a global pandemic, *Motherly*, 5/26/2020

gothamist

New York Is Expanding Paid Sick Leave For Workers Under Quarantine For COVID-19, *Gothamist*, 3/18/2020

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Workers Exhaust Time-Off Options as Covid-19, Child-Care Issues Compound, *Wall Street Journal*, 10/24/2020



Following the release of "Misled and Misinformed," our 2020 report on abusive attendance policies, Senator Warren launched a Congressional inquiry and sent five letters to major corporations.

NBC NIGHTLY NEWS

Miscarriage Matters: How workplace policies around pregnancy loss are changing, *NBC Nightly News with Kate Snow*, 2/9/2020

FT

Why the US is so vulnerable to coronavirus outbreak, *Financial Times*, 3/6/2020

In the Legislature



Co-Pres. Dina Bakst & board member Takirah Woods advocating for the PWFA on Capitol Hill.

We've also seen incredible progress in this movement in the states. Over the summer, we were thrilled to welcome Tennessee—where our Southern Office is based—as the 30th state to pass a pregnant workers fairness act, following in the footsteps of Virginia earlier this year, as well as New Mexico. The protections provided by these laws have been so important for pregnant workers amidst COVID-19, helping them to access accommodations they need to stay healthy, combatting economic insecurity, as well as helping to address shameful racial disparities in maternal health.

Leading on a Huge Victory for Paid Family & Medical Leave in Colorado

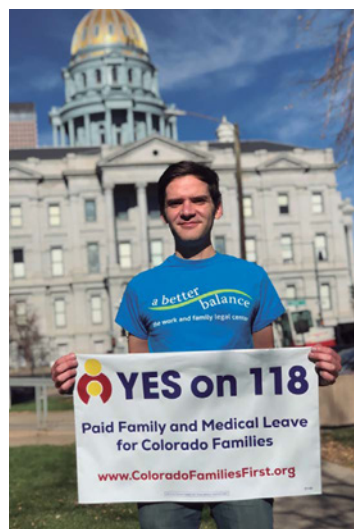
This election day, Colorado voters made history by overwhelmingly approving a paid family and medical leave ballot initiative, which we drafted and helped to pass! Colorado now joins 8 states, and Washington D.C., that have passed paid family and medical leave laws—and Colorado is the first to have done so through a ballot initiative. Before this initiative, only one in five Coloradans received paid family and medical leave. Once implemented, the law will provide workers with 12 weeks of paid time to bond with a new child, recover from a serious health condition, care for a seriously ill loved one, and more. We have also been hard at work helping to implement laws in Washington, D.C. and states like Oregon, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.

We are heartened by this fantastic momentum for truly inclusive paid family and medical leave, and we won't stop working until we achieve paid leave for all.

Passing the Federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act in the House

We are excited to share that in October, after eight years of our advocacy, the House passed the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act—with overwhelming bipartisan support! Every Democrat and a majority of Republicans voted yes to strengthening legal protections for pregnant workers by giving a right to reasonable accommodations on the job. With this historic vote, we're one huge step closer to ensuring pregnant workers across the country will never again have to choose between their job and the health of their pregnancy. We are so proud to have not only provided expert legal testimony before Congress, but to have built a deeply-rooted movement, alongside so many brave women who have shared their stories, beginning in 2012 when we published the New York Times Op-Ed that resulted in the bill's introduction in Congress.

We know that the effects of COVID-19 have been particularly harsh for pregnant women of color, due to longstanding racism and sexism in healthcare, the workplace, and our economic systems. We won't stop putting pressure on the Senate until this critical, long overdue bill becomes law.



Top: VP Jared Make at the Colorado capitol in Denver.

Bottom: VP Elizabeth Gedmark & staff attorney Kameron Dawson discuss the TN PWFA on Nashville local TV.



Pushing for Paid Sick Leave on Every Level of Government

Since the pandemic took root in the U.S. in March, we've been working at every level of government to advance paid sick leave. We paved the way for Congress to pass the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) in March, which for the first time in history, guaranteed covered workers a right to emergency paid sick leave when affected by COVID-19. And we've worked with dozens of states and localities as they seek to fill in gaps to ensure workers carved out of the federal law are covered and make these protections permanent. With our help:

- New York State enacted its emergency paid leave law in Mid-March, and workers across the state will have a right to take permanent paid sick time for routine personal and family health needs beginning on January 1st.
- Colorado guaranteed emergency paid leave to all workers carved out of the federal law in July, and, starting in January, workers in the State will begin earning permanent paid sick time—for routine health needs and future public health emergencies.
- 11 cities and counties in California have enacted COVID-19 emergency sick leave measures, followed by California's passage of a statewide emergency leave law.
- Philadelphia passed a very strong emergency leave law that included coverage of the city's gig economy workers.

In the Courts

Securing Much-Needed Relief for Our Clients at Walmart

We are working every day to enforce the laws that govern our workplaces and to ensure workers are receiving the legal protections they are entitled to. In May, we secured a historic, \$14 million settlement for nearly 4,000 Walmart workers who were denied equal treatment on the job during pregnancy—providing much-needed relief for those women and their families during these uncertain times. We represented the class of Walmart workers along with Co-Counsel Mehri & Skalet, PLLC and the NWLC.



ABB continues our advocacy during the pandemic, socially distanced!



Left: ABB staff attorney Cassandra Gomez calling for statewide paid sick leave in NY. Right: Co-Pres. Sherry Leiwant & Director of Paid Leave Molly Weston Williamson calling for paid leave for all in D.C.

Far too many workers—especially those who continue to work on the frontlines of the crisis in low-wage jobs, disproportionately women and people of color—remain excluded from these critical protections.

As we approach 2021, we are committed to helping to extend and build upon the FFCRA, and we look forward to working with the new administration on this critical issue.

Recognizing Childcare as Essential

With many schools, camps, and childcare facilities closed, millions of parents, especially those uncovered by paid leave, are left making impossible choices. We're advocating for the federal Child Care Is Essential Act, which would create a \$50 billion fund so that childcare providers can stay afloat until they are able to reopen safely.

We are so grateful to the brave workers who came forward and made this outcome possible.

Fighting Back Against State Interference with Local Workplace Laws

As a growing number of cities and counties across the country are acting to protect public health by guaranteeing workers paid sick time, we continue to see an increase in states preempting, or blocking, this local progress. This year, we saw a major victory in our efforts to push back against this undemocratic practice when Minnesota's Supreme Court affirmed the city of Minneapolis' authority to give workers the opportunity to earn paid sick time and upheld the law we drafted. This means that over 100,000 workers who were previously without a single paid sick day are now covered, and that other cities in the state can follow suit.

In Your Corner

Calls to our helpline have exploded during the pandemic, and we are helping workers across the country every single day. Not only does our helpline allow us to empower more and more people to exercise their workplace rights—the workers we hear from play a pivotal role in informing and shaping the policies we advocate for, like filling the gaps in the COVID-19 paid sick days and paid family leave federal laws.



Dreama's Story

"I didn't know how we'd maintain the household bills and get my son what he needed as far as school or someone watching him who we could trust."

Dreama, a fast food worker in Georgia, called us because she needed to stay home with her fifth-grade son when his elementary school closed. She took the 12 weeks of emergency paid family leave she was entitled to under the FFCRA, enabling her to care for her son while receiving income. But as Dreama neared exhausting this time off, her son's school was still closed, and she needed to return to work. She asked if she could bring her son to work—but she was told by higher-ups that the restaurant was "not a day care." She was also told that if she took unpaid leave—which would be a financial hardship to begin with—her employer couldn't guarantee her job. Eventually, having reached the limits of the legal protections available to her, Dreama's friend agreed to watch her son until his school re-opened. Dreama's story shows that in addition to adequate paid leave, working parents urgently need access to quality, affordable childcare. We will fight for women like Dreama—and millions more—in Congress in 2021.

What Comes Next

During this extremely challenging time, we're seeing how the laws we've passed over the last nearly-15 years are providing a lifeline for workers like Dreama. Yet existing laws do not offer a complete solution. Countless workers are still without the support they need; still one sickness or family emergency away from losing their income when they need it most.

That's why we're gearing up for what will be a huge year in the fight for workplace justice.

Your partnership is so important right now. Your support will allow us to:

1. **Expand our free legal helpline services** so we can empower more workers to exercise their legal rights at a time when they need us more than ever before.
2. **Work with President-elect Biden, Congress, and lawmakers** across the country to combat the care crisis and ensure the protections families urgently need are top of the agenda.
3. **Protect and defend the gains made for workers' rights** in the courts through strategic litigation.

Together, from New York to D.C., from Colorado to Tennessee, we will advance justice for workers!

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