



the work and family legal center

Public School Educators from Across Tennessee Call for Paid Parental Leave

Dear Members of the Tennessee General Assembly,

As public school teachers and administrators, we work hard to teach and care for children across our state. But without dedicated paid parental leave, many of us are unable to take adequate time to care for our own children without sacrificing our income or savings. We urge you to support SB 1458/HB 983, a bill that would provide 6 weeks of paid parental leave for public school teachers and administrators across Tennessee.

Currently, most teachers must either take unpaid leave or exhaust our paid sick and vacation days when a new child arrives, leaving no remaining paid leave in case we or our child get sick later on. Providing paid parental leave separately ensures that educators can reserve our paid sick days for when we truly need them.

Paid parental leave will make local school districts more competitive in recruiting and retaining employees. Our neighboring state of Georgia now offers paid parental leave for its K-12 educators, and major Tennessee companies like FedEx and Pilot Flying J offer it as well. This is critical as districts struggle with high turnover and a shortage of qualified educators. According to a 2021 survey of Tennessee educators, 22% of respondents indicated they planned to leave the public education field altogether.

Paid parental leave promotes economic security, improves maternal and child health, and ultimately keeps people attached to the workforce. No public educator should have to choose between caring for our own children or maintaining our family's economic security. Enacting SB 1458/HB 983 is a simple way to support teachers and ensure that Tennessee schools retain qualified educators, leading to stronger families and communities.

Sincerely,

First Name	Last Name	Position	School District
Ashlyn	Adams	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Melinda	Amundson	Teacher	Tipton County Schools
Leslie	Angerer	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Tina	Atkinson	Teacher	Metro Nashville Public Schools
Emily	Bray	Teacher	Metro Nashville Public Schools

Teresa	Brown	Retired teacher	Knox County Schools
Christina	Brumleve	Teacher	Metro Nashville Public Schools
Karen	Dodd	Teacher	Rutherford County Schools
Margo	Edwards	Teacher	Memphis Shelby County Schools
Leslie	Fowler	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Dave	Gorman	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Abby	Hemenway Brown	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Macy	Hillis	Teacher	Rutherford County Schools
Carrye	Holland	Principal	Memphis Shelby County Schools
Linda	Holtzclaw	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Alysia	Jenkins	Teacher	Rutherford County Schools
Ashley	Johnson	Teacher	Tipton County Schools
Michele	King	Substitute teacher	State Special Schools
Taylor	Kollenberg	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Jennifer	Krouse	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Kim	Lee	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Lovie	Lester	Teacher	Metro Nashville Public Schools
Marsha	Livingston	Retired teacher	Anderson County
Sierra	Magee	Teacher	Hamilton County Schools
Carolyn	Marks	Retired special education teacher	Knox County Schools
Chloe	Martin	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Seaton	Massey	Speech language pathologist	Rhea County Schools
Terri	McConnell	Teacher	Metro Nashville Public Schools
Erin	McDaniel	Administrator	Metro Nashville Public Schools
Melody	Morgan	Teacher	Rutherford County Schools
Jessica	Morris	Teacher	Metro Nashville Public Schools
Michael	O'Malley	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Tamika	Poindexter	Administrator	Tipton County Schools
Rachel	Reyes	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Makenna	Rivera	Teacher	Memphis Shelby County Schools
Jessica	Romero	Speech language pathologist	Rhea County Schools

Rachel	Sanders	Teacher	Tipton County Schools
Dana	Sanders	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Laura	Schlesinger	Teacher	Rutherford County Schools
Brittany	Shelton	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Sarah	Shoesmith	Teacher	Knox County Schools
Nancy	Simon	Retired teacher	Knox County Schools
Danette	Stokes	Teacher	Memphis Shelby County Schools
Ashley	Strobel	Teacher	Metro Nashville Public Schools
Jessica	Supakhan	Administrator	Rutherford County Schools
Cortney	Tankersley	Teacher	Tipton County Schools
Jacob	Truax	Teacher	Rutherford County Schools
Kathryn	Vaughn	Teacher	Tipton County Schools
Terri	Wall	Teacher	Metro Nashville Public Schools
Susan	Weaver Jones	Retired educator	Knox County Schools
Jordan	Williams	Teacher	Paris Special School District