



## IWV Welcomes the Cassidy/Sinema Plan

August 20, 2019

Dear Senators Cassidy and Sinema,

Americans want people to be able to take time off from work when they really need it, and not face financial hardship as a result. Yet there are fundamental disagreements about how to expand access to paid parental leave.

Thank you, Senators Cassidy and Sinema, for introducing your new, innovative proposal, which would offer new parents the option to take a \$5,000 advance on the child tax credit to allow them to take paid time off to welcome a new child. Unlike the FAMILY Act, your proposal aims to expand access to paid family leave in a way that does not disadvantage low-income families and would also not impose new costs on those who choose not to participate. This approach would also be voluntary for workers, would not raise taxes or grow government, and would not change existing compensation arrangements between employers and workers.

While we have concerns about the potential for policymakers to eliminate the payback aspect of your proposal, we welcome and applaud your willingness to engage in this important debate, to think outside of the traditional tax-and-spend box, and to work to give workers more and better options.

Independent Women's Voice, a group dedicated to fighting for policies that aren't just well intended, but actually enhance people's freedom, choices, and opportunities, has serious concerns about the unintended consequences of an entitlement-based paid leave program like the FAMILY Act. As IWF's Kristin Shapiro draws attention to in [IWF's July Policy Focus](#), studies show that similar entitlement programs in other countries and U.S. states transfer wealth away from low-income families to high- and middle- income families. We need to find other, better ways to provide families with the support they need, without burdening low-income workers or reducing workplace opportunity and flexibility.

As policymakers continue to examine different approaches to expanding access to paid parental leave, IWV strongly supports budget-neutral policies that offer workers maximum flexibility without backfiring on the most vulnerable families or unfairly burdening those with no plans to use the benefit. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Carrie Lukas'.

**Carrie Lukas**

*Vice President for Policy*

*Independent Women's Voice*