



May 7, 2009

Dear Senator:

The United States needs a flexible federal leave policy that reflects the nature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. Unfortunately, current labor laws have not kept pace with the evolving needs of today's diverse, adaptable and mobile working families.

**It's time for change.** The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the 250,000 human resource professionals it represents believe it's time to give employees choices and give employers more predictability. It's time to *encourage* paid leave—*without* creating more arcane federal regulations.

**SHRM has a plan.** We believe employers should be encouraged to provide the paid leave their workforces need—and let *employees* decide how to use it. Every need—from caring for an ailing family member to attending a child's Little League game—would be eligible. No doctor's note or letter of explanation from employees. In return, employers who choose to provide paid leave would no longer be encumbered by pages of federal and state leave rules—rules that often are in conflict, hurt employee morale, and hinder an employer's ability to manage unplanned absences.

Several "paid leave" proposals are pending in Congress, but they all would impose specific new mandates on both employees and employers. As has been our experience under the Family and Medical Leave Act, these proscriptive attempts to micro-manage how, when and under what circumstances leave must be requested, granted and used are counter-productive to encouraging flexibility and innovation.

Since HR professionals are on the front lines of critical workplace issues every day, SHRM's solution reflects how companies really operate. We're ready to take the lead in working with you on a sensible federal leave policy that ensures fairness and balance for employees and employers.

I have attached a set of principles that offer more details about our proposal. Also, please feel free to have your staff contact Lisa Horn in my office at 703-535-6352 or at [Lisa.Horn@SHRM.org](mailto:Lisa.Horn@SHRM.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laurence G. O'Neil', written in a cursive style.

Laurence G. O'Neil  
President & CEO