

**Press Contacts:**

**Julie Malveaux 703-535-6273**

[jmalveaux@shrm.org](mailto:jmalveaux@shrm.org)

**Jennifer Hughes 703-535-6072**

[jhughes@shrm.org](mailto:jhughes@shrm.org)

**Jeanene Harris 703-535-6356**

[jharris@shrm.org](mailto:jharris@shrm.org)



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**For Immediate Release**

## **SHRM Calls for Flexible, Voluntary Federal Policy on Paid Leave**

*SHRM COO Outlines Problems with Healthy Families Act and Other Mandates in House Testimony*

**Alexandria, Va., – June 11, 2009** – In testimony today before the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, China Miner Gorman, Chief Operating Officer of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), urged Congress to consider an approach to policies governing workplace leave that reflects the needs of today’s more mobile, diverse and flexible 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce.

In her testimony, Gorman reiterated SHRM’s call for incentives to encourage employers to adopt paid leave plans, and was critical of attempts to impose one-size-fits-all paid leave mandates on employers, as embodied in H.R. 2460, the “Healthy Families Act.”

“We believe Congress should seek ways to offer incentives for employers to do more – not risk the unintended consequences of an onerous government mandate that could very well result in decreased benefits and fewer new jobs,” stated Gorman.

“Employers want predictability and employees want flexibility in their paid leave plans,” Gorman continued. “Government mandates can be counterproductive, as seemingly simple and well-intentioned statutes result in hundreds of pages of rules that can work against flexibility for employees.”

As an example, Gorman cited the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, and the fact that HR professionals have struggled to interpret various provisions of the law. What began as a fairly simple 12-page document has turned into 200 pages of rigid government regulations.

SHRM’s alternative approach – a 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace flexibility policy – would for the first time respond to the diverse needs of employees *and* employers, and reflect different work environments, union representation, industries and organizational size.

SHRM recently outlined a series of principles to guide the development of a federal policy on workplace flexibility that would:

- Encourage employers to offer uniform and coordinated paid leave;
- Create administrative and compliance incentives for employers who meet the leave standard;
- Provide certainty, predictability and accountability for employers and employees; and
- Allow for different work environments, industries and organizational size.

To review SHRM’s *Principles for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workplace Flexibility Policy*, visit [www.SHRM.org/SHRMisHR](http://www.SHRM.org/SHRMisHR).

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*The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world’s largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 250,000 members in over 140 countries, the Society serves the needs of HR professionals and advances the interests of the HR profession. Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 575 affiliated chapters within the United States and subsidiary offices in China and India. Visit SHRM Online at [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org).*