

Esteemed Members of the City Council –

As part of our ongoing effort to promote Columbia as a family-friendly and worker-friendly city, we are requesting that you initiate study of a policy for paid family leave among city employees.

This was implemented recently among executive branch employees for the state of Missouri¹ and proposed for all state employees² by conservative administrations, as well passed by a rather progressive city council in Kansas City³. It is a bipartisan issue, and a trend among many states and cities seeking to retain and attract employees while advancing the basic dignity of parents and workers.

We realize that this is endeavor will cost more than a trivial amount, and that there is little room for the expansion of new programs among the city's budget at the moment. Acknowledging that, we believe that beginning a cost study such as this is crucial to beginning a conversation about the feasibility of the city offering such a benefit. We should not dismiss the possibility entirely for its potential costs without a clearer idea of what they may be.

As a starting point for the investigation, we suggest a comparable proposal to Kansas City's recently implemented policy for paid family leave. There, both mothers and fathers receive up to six weeks paid leave after the birth or adoption of a new child. While this falls short of what many other industrialized countries offer, it would nonetheless be an important step forward.

Zach Rubin
Chair, Commission on Human Rights

¹ http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/greitens-orders-paid-parental-leave-for-missouri-s-executive-branch/article_edba1833-17f4-59e0-a59e-0ae2dc86c6d1.html

² <https://themissouritimes.com/47137/kelly-introduces-paid-family-leave-legislation/>

³ <http://www.kansascity.com/news/politics-government/article25508446.html>