



City of Columbia, Missouri

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

October 26th, 2016

To: Mayor and Members of City Council
From: Columbia Commission on Human Rights
Subject: Paid Parental Leave

Dear Mayor and Members of City Council;

At the regularly schedule Commission on Human Rights meeting of September 6th, 2016, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) discussed the budget proposal from Council Member Trapp to add 10 weeks of Paid Parental Leave as a fiscal year 2017 budget amendment. After much discussion, and believing paid parental leave to be an issue pertinent to the HRC, members voted unanimously to support the budget amendment and communicate via memo as such. While we realize that at this time Paid Parental Leave cannot be enacted in the 2017 budget, we strongly urge the council to consider adopting such a program for the 2018 budget and beyond.

The commission members felt that paid parental leave would not only help ease one aspect of the birth of a child or adoption, but would also help to strengthen families by allowing parents and children much-needed time to bond without the fear or burden of not having paid leave. The need for paid leave for new parents, especially those that may not have enough leave accrued, has the additional advantage of helping relieve the disparate impact we see on women as caregivers for children. Finally, this step could help address and minimize one source of income disparity between men and women; a demonstration on the city's part that it is committed to pay equity between the sexes.

Commission members wanted to further communicate that while we feel this change would be positive for the City of Columbia, we look forward to a future where paid leave encompasses more than just new parents (for instance, to care for an ailing family member). The commission looks to lessen disparate impacts wherever possible, and there may be those individuals that are incapable of having children or adopting and thus are disproportionately affected by a paid parental-only leave policy. The commission views this proposal, and any future additions to this proposal, as a step forward in achieving a more equal city.

Sincerely,

Scott Dean, Chair
City of Columbia Commission on Human Rights