

Is Illinois Ready for Paid Parental Leave?

*Potential Benefits for Individuals,
Families, Employers and the State*

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ABSTRACT

Studies on paid parental leave (PPL) in Europe and, more recently, in the United States, suggest that PPL offer many benefits for children and families and even to employers. In this report we suggest that offering PPL to Illinoisans may also benefit the state of Illinois by situating it as the most family-friendly state in the Midwest. We review past research on the benefits of PPL to different stakeholders and suggest that offering PPL to Illinoisans might invigorate Illinois' population growth by both decreasing the migration of young families out of Illinois and increasing the migration of such families to Illinois.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, Illinois' population has decreased by 0.7% (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). The loss of residents has become a contested issue within a state which has seen consistent year over year population declines. Taking a longer perspective, Illinois has seen some of the slowest growth among US states in the last two decades, seeing its population grow by 3.3% between 2000 and 2010. Only Michigan, Ohio, Rhode Island, Louisiana, West Virginia, New York and Massachusetts grew at a slower rate than Illinois over that period (Franklin, 2014). Franklin (2014), who decomposed growth into national, cohort, and competitive effects, showed that Illinois' entire growth during 2000-2010 can be attributed to national effects (e.g., growth of the entire US), while Illinois lost 774,905 individuals over that period considering only competitive effects (i.e., how attractive is the state compared to other states). This reduction has included high skilled college graduates (Davila, Klemens, & Ross, 2016; Wright & Ellis, 2019) who are beginning their careers and starting families in other states that offer a more attractive lifestyle for individuals and families.

As a growing number of women and mothers join the workforce, parents, both mothers and fathers, are looking for supportive state policies that would enable them to balance the pressure of being an attentive parent and a successful employee. This is especially true for members of the millennial generation that has shown a deep appreciation for success at both work and life outside of work.

In this report we explore the option of using Paid Parental Leave (PPL) policy to increase the attractiveness of Illinois workplaces. The analysis focuses on three different population categories: newcomers – those who choose to move to Illinois from other states; leavers – those who choose to leave Illinois to other states; and, stayers – those who choose to stay in Illinois. We

briefly discuss their reasoning for coming, leaving, and staying. We then move to describe paid parental leave (PPL) as an option the state of Illinois should consider as part of an effort to increase the quality of life in Illinois, making it a more attractive state to both Illinoisans and individuals and families from other states.

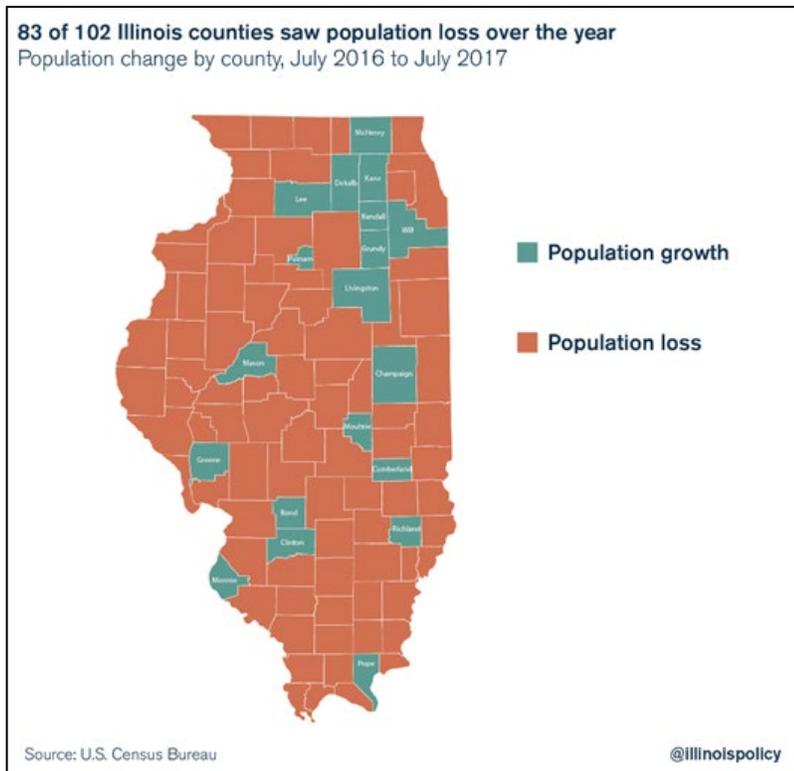
WHO IS COMING AND WHO IS STAYING?

Illinois has experienced an exodus of residents in recent years (Pew, 2017). Between July 2017 and July 2018, Illinois lost over 45,000 resident, second only to New York (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Over the past five years the state's population has declined by 157,000 residents (Vasilogambros, 2019). Illinois' "exodus" is a mixture of many factors, including loss of manufacturing, stagnant immigration, declining birth rates, and reduced state investments in higher education. In the previous decade, between 2000 and 2010, Illinois saw a weak population growth, attributed by research to the general growth in US population (Franklin, 2014).

It is however also true that a large number of people choose to move to Illinois for its high quality college educational system. Although the number of out of state students has decreased over time, many college towns like Champaign, home to the University of Illinois, and Bloomington, home to Illinois State University, have seen a slight increase in their population over the past several years (Illinois Population, 2019; CTBA, 2017; see Figure 1).

There is much less statistical information about those who choose to stay in Illinois. The population that is the most satisfied, and are choosing to remain in Illinois are those forty to sixty year old. Many of these are families, with steady well-paying jobs. These families have a house in the suburbs surrounding Chicago, and the rest of Cook County. These families have older children, some of which are already living

Figure 1



in a different residence. This population has a relatively comfortable living, can afford the higher cost of living (e.g., property taxes), and is reluctant to start over in a new location (CTBA, 2017).

WHO IS LEAVING?

The number of households leaving Illinois over the past 5-10 years has remained relatively constant, but the number of individuals and families moving to Illinois has significantly decreased (Davila, Klemens, & Ross, 2016). There is lack of sufficient research on leavers, but it seems that young individuals who are entering college or have recently graduated college and are looking to start their life and first careers are an important group of people who choose to leave Illinois (Davila, Klemens, & Ross, 2016). According to a 2019 analysis by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, in 2017 roughly half of Illinois college-bound public high school students chose to go to out-of-state universities and

colleges. But in 2002 the number of high school graduates attending non-Illinois higher education institutions was less than 30%. More problematic, there is some evidence that they are less likely to return home after graduation. According to the U.S. Education Department, Illinois ranks second nationally in losing college students to other states. The state's deep cuts in education funding as a casualty of the 2015-2017 state budget impasse is a sizeable contributing factor to the outmigration of young people. Since 2000, Illinois' public universities have experienced a severe 48 percent funding cut (Román, 2019).

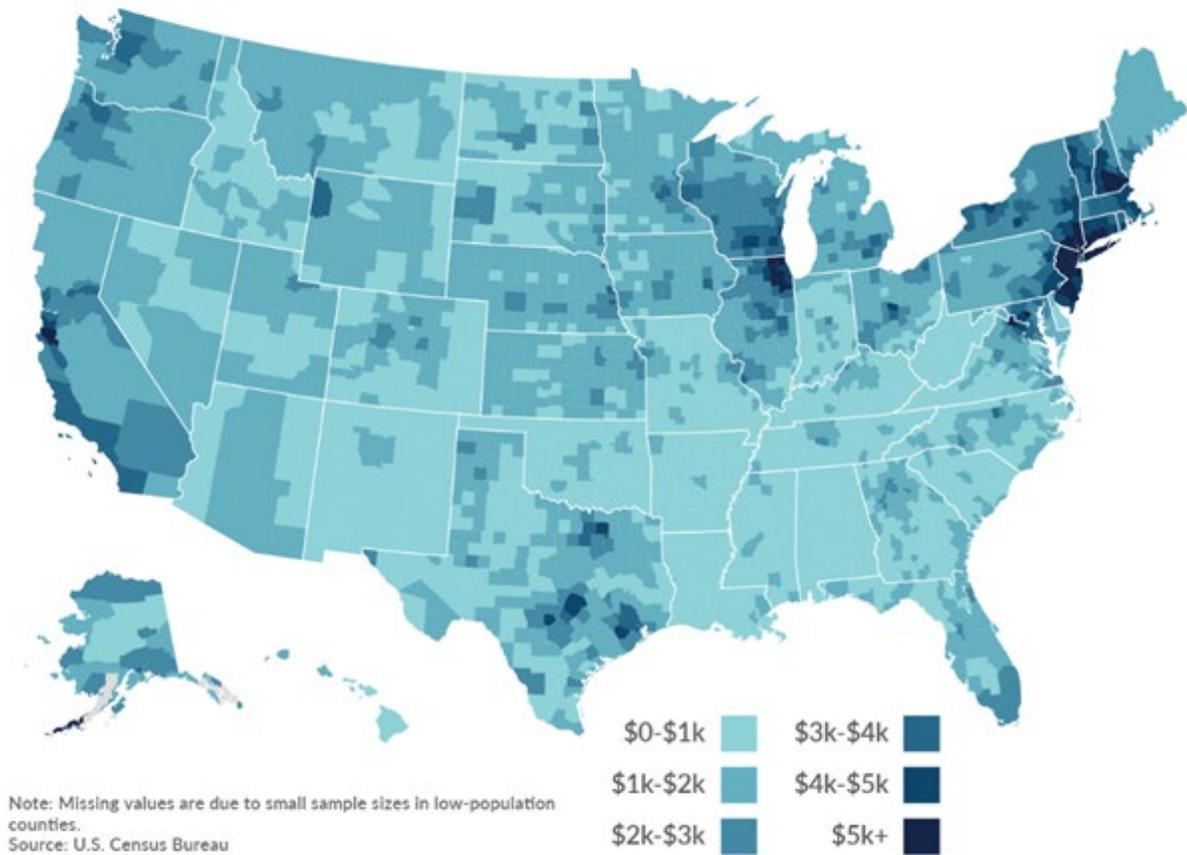
Individuals leaving Illinois who are in their late twenties and early thirties and just starting a family or are likely to start one in the near future, also impact

the state's child population. While there is no research we are aware of studying reasons behind individuals and families leaving Illinois, past research has shown that internal migration in the U.S. occurs due to different reasons, such as beliefs about employment probabilities, expected wages, expected costs of living, local amenities and tax rates, monetary and psychological moving costs, and the costs of buying and selling a home (Molloy, Smith, & Wozniak, 2011). Media outlets, such as the Chicago Tribune, reported that among the reasons mentioned by those leaving Illinois are high taxes, crime, lack of jobs, the poor housing market and the weather (Eltagouri, 2016; Marksjarvis & Shropshire, 2017). The largest percentage of individuals leaving includes very young adults who are leaving the state to go to college or start their career (Illinois Population, 2019).

Figure 2

Which Places Pay the Most in Property Taxes?

Median Property Taxes Paid by County (2010-2014)



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WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

Five states have become most popular for out-migrants from Illinois. Many people move out (and in) from the bordering state of Indiana. About 34,220 Illinois residents moved to Indiana, citing taxes and housing costs as the main reasons. The second most popular destination is Texas, followed by Florida, California, and Wisconsin. However, these patterns are very similar for neighboring states, like Indiana and Wisconsin. Illinois also has strong migration ties with Missouri, Michigan, Iowa, Ohio, and Arizona. Illinois is on the “gaining side” with some states - Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Ohio,

while on the “losing side” of migration with Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin (Davila, Klemens, & Ross, 2016).

REASONS FOR LEAVING ILLINOIS

According to the Census Bureau of the United States, housing related issues were the most common reason for people to move in the US, with family reasons coming next, followed by job related reasons. Housing costs, as can be seen in Figure 2, might be a significant cause for leaving the Chicago area (and Illinois) to neighboring states. More anecdotal evidence suggests that people are migrating for different reasons, citing

family and social connections, familiarity with a state or area, and lower income tax. As noted in Guis (2009), regardless of race, sex, or age, people move based on their familiarity with an area and for a lower income tax. Illinois, while having an average income tax, similar to that of many states to which people migrate (or even lower) is often cited as a state where individuals and families claim they pay too much in taxes (Eltagouri, 2016; Marksjarvis & Shropshire, 2017). The lack of fit between the average amount of taxes Illinoisans pay relative to other states and the inaccurate perception of paying relatively high taxes, may be an indicator that leavers perceive they do not receive enough benefits in return for the taxes they pay. We suggest PPL as a potential policy that will convince Illinois residents that they receive a return on their taxes and that will attract individuals and families from neighboring states.

WHY PAID PARENTAL LEAVE?

There are several advantages to offering Paid Parental Leave (PPL). Research evidence strongly supports the benefits of parental leave to parents, children, and families. Paid parental leave has been shown to extend the length of leave individuals take after the birth or adoption of a child. Furthermore, PPL has been shown (e.g., in California) to increase the likelihood that mothers, and especially lower-income mothers, return to work for the same employer after giving birth, thus benefiting both mothers and employers.

Beyond those reasons, it seems that Illinois can especially benefit from offering PPL because of its unique standings in the Midwest. Illinois is the largest state in the Midwest and it has the fifth largest economy in the nation; more than twice Indiana's and drawing Wisconsin and Iowa. Yet, young individuals and families leave Illinois, many of them to neighboring states. At the same time, the most likely source of new population is

also located in Illinois' neighboring states. Since none of the neighboring states offer PPL (currently offered only in California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, New York, Washington, Massachusetts, and DC), PPL could be an attractive reason to individuals and families to not only stay in Illinois, but also migrate to it from neighboring states. PPL is also likely to retain and attract a key population for the continuous growth of Illinois. When young individuals and families move out of Illinois, the state not only loses purchasing power, entrepreneurial activity and taxable income, (Moody, 2014), but also loses future generations of Illinoisans.

PPL AND THE WORK DOMAIN

In order to be considered middle class in today's society, the majority of households typically include dual earning couples. Senator Elizabeth Warren in a testimony before the Senate Committee in 2007, has shown that while middle class earnings have risen over the last decades, the entire increase, adjusting for inflation, came from secondary earners. In fact, full-time working men today, earn about \$800 less than the average full-time working men in the 1970s, after adjusting for inflation (warren, 2007). There is extensive research on the effects of dual-job family structures and family outcomes. Research has generally shown many benefits of offering PPL. For example, a California survey of employers and employees (Appelbaum & Milkman, 2011; Milkman & Appelbaum, 2013) has shown that a significant percent of employers reported "positive effect" or "no noticeable effect" on productivity (89 percent), profitability and performance (91 percent), employees' turnover (96 percent) and employees' morale (99 percent). Other studies corroborate these findings, showing parental leave to be related to higher job satisfaction among employees (e.g., Kramer, Bae, Huh, & Pak, 2019), positive mental and physical health outcomes in children (Rossin, 2011; Ruhm,

2000; Tanaka, 2005), and increased attachment of women to the labor market (Byker, 2016; Rossin-Slater & Ruhm, 2013).

More broadly, family-friendly workplaces and policies have been shown to benefit working individuals, parents and non-parents. Having a policy that supports family-life balance was shown to positively relate to job satisfaction, affective commitment, and intentions to stay with one's employer (e.g., Kelly et al., 2008; Kramer et al., 2019). In addition, such policies are negatively related to work-to-family conflict. Many times, the positive benefits of family-friendly policies are amplified when supervisors are supportive of such policies (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Further, Casper and Yang (2012) reveal that simply the availability of family-friendly policies (not usage) or potential access to such policies was positively related to a higher job satisfaction. This research suggests that offering PPL can be correlated with positive outcomes even when individuals will not necessarily use PPL.

When considering a paid parental leave policy, the issue of a "motherhood penalty" often arises. Women are often perceived as giving priority to family over work, and as a result, they are less likely to be hired, promoted, and compensated by a company, relative to men, who are often perceived as giving work priority. This is especially true of mothers, since having children is perceived as a signal for such priorities (Aranda & Glick, 2014). However, a paid parental leave policy has the potential to decrease this penalty, and reduce gender discrimination, especially if men are actively encouraged to use PPL when having a new child. In reality, unpaid leave is almost solely taken by women due to the physical burdens of giving birth and financial constraints that do not allow both spouses to take unpaid leave. A set time for PPL can allow for each new parent, male and female, to take a specific amount of time off, and has the potential to reduce the "motherhood penalty" by leveling the playing

field. Indeed, past research has shown that paid parental leave policy has incentivized more mothers to stay in the labor force and not leaving it after having children (Goldin & Katz, 2011). This greater labor force attachment can reduce the stereotypes regarding mothers' commitment to the labor force. This will be especially true if a short mandated PPL period (e.g., a week) will be enforced.

PPL AND THE FAMILY DOMAIN

When considering the family domain, our current research is intended to create what would be the ideal policy for overall family functioning and outcomes. For dual earner couples contemplating taking parental leave after their child is born, research has found many beneficial outcomes that arise when both fathers and mothers take parental leave to care for their children. Today, the United States offers very little support for new parents, where other nations prioritize and encourage mothers and fathers to take paternity leave. This simple positivity and more generous leave policies have been shown to increase leave length of fathers in other countries, but the United States continues to see very little progress (Pragg & Knoester, 2015). Implementing a PPL policy also benefits fathers in many ways. Taking parental leave as a father is closely linked with higher father engagement levels at one year and five years after the child is born, even after only two weeks of leave (Pragg & Knoester, 2015).

Additionally, when fathers take longer leave, they tend to participate in more child care and develop a stronger parental identity. Fathers get a better sense of what type of work goes into raising a child and have a greater appreciation for the work that goes on in the house. Fathers are more involved in the home, and research has shown this has led to a more equal division of housework and childcare (Schober & Zoch, 2015). A paid parental leave policy will allow fathers to spend more time with their child and understand and

appreciate the work involved, as well as develop a stronger attachment to their children.

Research also finds that a policy which permits both parents to take time off has great effects on maternal health outcomes and family well-being (Beuchert, Humlum, & Vejin, 2016). Initially, a paid parental leave policy has many benefits for a new mother. After giving birth, many mothers need the time to recover, physically and mentally. Current research suggests that increased length of leave results in fewer hospital admission within one to five years after giving birth (Beuchert, Humlum, & Veilin, 2016). This shows that a longer maternity leave could decrease the probability of inpatient and outpatient hospital admissions for the mothers after giving birth. When mothers can take more time off to care for their child, they are also spending time recovering and ensuring they are stable enough before they return to work. This paid parental leave is even more significant for low-resource families. Mothers who would otherwise not be economically able to take off of work show the most significant health improvements when given the opportunity to take paid parental leave (Beuchert, Humlum, & Veilin, 2016).

Additionally, a paid parental leave policy has many health benefits for the new-born children. One study found that when a mother stays home with her child for a longer period of time she is likely to breastfeed for a longer period of time. This opportunity to continue breastfeeding increases the health of the newborn at age seven to twelve months. Some of the benefits of continued breastfeeding include more robust growth in weight and a substantial decrease in infant mortality (Beuchert, Humlum, & Veilin, 2016). Also, studies have shown that there are health benefits for the older siblings of newborn children. When mothers or fathers are able to stay home from work to care for their newborn, they also provide more care for their other children. Research has found that siblings are positively affected by the increase of maternity leave and the

extra time with parents lowers the need for inpatient hospital admission and drug abuse (Beuchert, Humlum, & Veilin, 2016).

SAMPLE OF CURRENT PRIVATE, NATIONAL AND US STATE POLICIES

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, brought forth by the Clinton administration, contains 12 weeks of unpaid leave for mothers who meet certain eligibility criteria as well as mandating the return of jobs to the mothers when maternity leave ends (Baum, 2003). Those who are able to take leave are women who have worked for the company for at least a year, completing over 1200 working hours in the last year (Baum, 2003). Only companies with over 50 employees can be covered by the maternity leave mandates. (Baum, 2003). Anyone or any company that does not fit these requirements will be unable to use the unpaid leave maternity leave.

Baum (2003) shows that maternity leave has little to no effect on employment and wages. There is little effect because of how short the leave is and the fact that it is unpaid. Many companies could have also offered leave to their employees before the federal mandate (Baum, 2003). While taking this leave can provide benefits to the mother and child and their mental and physical wellbeing, many are unable to use the full leave because of the fact that it is unpaid. Employees worry about how they will pay bills if they are not being paid (Waldfogel, 2001).

Since there is no federal paid parental leave policy within the United States, multiple states and companies have implemented their own parental leave policies in order to be more competitive against other states and companies to draw in more people because of their benefits offered. Some states that have created their own policies are California, New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. California's statewide policy offers both mothers and fathers 12 weeks of paid leave or

unpaid job protected leave within a 12-month period. Employees who earn less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of California's average quarterly wage will now be paid 70% of their weekly wages for 6 weeks; then the other 6 weeks are optional and unpaid. For those who make more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the average quarterly wage, they receive 60% of their weekly salary for 6 weeks of parental leave (Tucker, 2018). New York, on the other hand, offers both mothers and fathers 10 weeks of paid leave for up to 55% of their weekly wage. These are just two different examples of states that have created and implemented their own very different parental leave policies. Each state has to find a right policy that works for them and their population and has shown great benefits, which is why we propose implementing one into the state of Illinois.

Companies' parental leave policies, on the other hand, have limitations to them for their employees; unlike the statewide policy, where that is guaranteed for all workers. We researched a large amount of varying companies and the benefits that they offered to their employees in order to incentivize them to stay at their company. Google offered their employees 4 weeks before the birth and 6-8 weeks after the birth of paid leave for mothers and 7-12 weeks of paid paternity leave for fathers. Delta Airlines offered 6 weeks of paid maternity leave and only 1 week of paid paternity leave. Deloitte offers 16 weeks for both mothers and fathers of fully paid family care, whether that includes a new child, or a sick spouse or parent. As we can see, in similarity to different states, each company implements their own policy of their choosing, and they differ significantly from one company to another. The limitations with company's policies, though, are that the leave is an incentive driven system. This means that a company as a whole must meet certain standards of productivity before it is allowed to grant their employees leave. So although they have parental leave policies to offer to employees, companies cannot guarantee time

off before they meet certain standards, as a company, before receiving it.

Countries outside the United States have implemented paid parental leave policies such as South Korea, Germany and Australia. Each policy varies, but still one key and common component across countries is the policies provide paid parental leave for both fathers and mothers.

In South Korea, starting in 2020, mothers will be able to take maternity leave at any point during their pregnancy by working two hours less every working day without a salary cut. The government also plans to raise the financial assistance during their leave from 40% to 50% of their regular pay. Parents with children under the age of eight can take as much as one year's worth of leave as well. For the first three months of the paternal leave, the government increased the amount of money given to each father while he takes the leave by over \$500.

The policy in Germany is the most progressive policy in terms of time off for both parents. In Germany, the government offers up to 12 months of paid parental leave. If both parents take a minimum of two months leave, then they are able to receive an extra two months of leave. This is an incentive for both parents to take leave, instead of just the mother, and will increase the paid leave period to 14 months. Mothers also have mandated fully paid leave six weeks before the birth and then eight weeks after. Then for the next 12 months after that, they can receive 65% of the monthly salary for the rest of their leave. More weeks are given in the case of premature or multiple births.

Australia's policy entails a maximum of 18 weeks of paid, government-funded parental leave at the national minimum wage (719.35 a week before tax) and partners can receive 2 weeks of paid parental leave at the minimum wage as well. Employers can also provide parental leave based on the contract made between the employee and employer. In order to qualify for this policy, one

must pass a variety of test including a work, income, and residency test.

When parental leave policies offer a paid leave, it is usually given with a wage cut. Although the employees are earning some money, it still may not be enough to sustain the same way of life by only receiving a portion of the original salary. Employees claim that they need a higher percentage of their salary for their time off, but employers argue that they should be satisfied their employees are getting any money at all.

In order for a paid parental leave policy to be the most beneficial, it is important to find the right balance between the number of leave days and the proportion of salary received for those days. When looking at current policies, New York is a good example of a possibly unsustainable balance in time and money. New York's current policy provides 10 weeks of paid leave for both mother and fathers, but at only 55% of employees weekly salary. For minimum wage, dual-earner households, this 45% wage cut is likely too high for the family to use the leave.

Another example is California's policy. The percentage of money given to the employees is based on their wage in comparison to the state's average. If an individual is making above the average salary, the employee could take a greater wage cut than an individual earning less than average. Since California's policy is only for a 6 week period, the government is willing to give up to 70% of the salary for the lowest paying incomes. Deciding wage cuts for a leave policy could happen based on overall household income. This would ensure that every employee was able to take some amount of leave, and still afford it based on their salary. An employee earning minimum wage may only be able to afford a paid leave at 90% income, but someone earning a much higher income may be okay at a lower cut similar to New York's 55%. This way it could ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to take the paid leave offered.

CONCLUSION

Paid parental leave has proved benefits to families and employees and, at least based on some limited evidence from states that offer paid parental, does not hurt businesses and might even benefit them (Appelbaum & Milkman, 2011; Byker, 2016; Milkman & Appelbaum, 2013; Rossin-Slater & Ruhm, 2013). At the same time, most new parents in the US do not have access to paid parental leave and even when available, some families can not use them to their full extent due to a low replacement rate (Ruhm, 1998). Overall, it seems that paid parental leave with close to a full replacement rate will result in healthier families and stronger attachment to the labor force, especially of low-income female employees (Byker, 2016; Goldin & Katz, 2011; Rossin-Slater & Ruhm, 2013; Ruhm, 1998).

Our suggestion about the impact of paid parental leave on Illinois' population growth is at this point speculative. Future research on the appeal of paid parental leave to Illinois residents and employers would be needed, to establish a strong relationship between the policy, the betterment of Illinois' families and population growth through reducing out migration and increasing migration of young families to Illinois.

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