

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND  
GENDER EQUITY

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September 17, 2025  
Start: 10:16 a.m.  
Recess: 11:10 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - 8<sup>th</sup> Floor - Hearing  
Room 3

B E F O R E: Farah N. Louis,  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Tiffany Cabán  
Jennifer Gutiérrez  
Kevin C. Riley  
Inna Vernikov

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Daniel Pollak

First Deputy Commissioner at the Office of Labor  
Relations.

Elizabeth Wagoner

Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Labor  
Policy & Standards at DCWP

Ali Rasoulinejad

Assistant Commissioner for Strategic Planning and  
Services at DCAS Human Capital

Christopher Leon Johnson

Self

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Check one, two. Check, check.  
3 Check, check, check.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning. This is the  
5 Committee on Women and Gender Equity. Today's date  
6 is September 17, 2025. Location is 250 Broadway the  
7 8<sup>th</sup> Floor hearing Room 3 recorded by Ginelle  
8 Yearwood.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning. Welcome to  
10 today's New York City Council hearing for the  
11 Committee on Women and Gender Equity. At this time,  
12 we would like to ask everyone to place all electronic  
13 devices to vibrate. If you would like to participate  
14 in today's hearing, please fill out an appearance  
15 card with the Sergeant at Arms. Moving forward, no  
16 one is to approach the dais unless your name has been  
17 called. Chair Louis, we are ready to begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [GAVEL] Good morning and  
19 welcome to today's oversight hearing on the  
20 Implementation of Paid Family Leave and Prenatal  
21 Leave in New York City. I'm Council Member Farah  
22 Louis, Chair of the Committee on Women and Gender  
23 Equity.

24 Thank you to everyone who has signed up to  
25 testify. We look forward to hearing your testimony.

1 Today, the Committee will consider the following  
2 legislation, Preconsidered T2025-4108 sponsored by  
3 Council Member Ayala requiring DOHMH to provide  
4 several kinds of paternal health related information  
5 to two populations. Historically most low wage  
6 workers didn't have paid leave to recover from  
7 illness, care for sick family, or bond with a new  
8 child. This created an impossible choice for workers  
9 between caring for themselves or their families and  
10 going to work. Workers lost wages or even jobs when  
11 taking needed time to care for others or recover from  
12 illness. Paid family leave provides job protection,  
13 continued health insurance, and protection from  
14 discrimination or retaliation.  
15

16 Economic studies have shown that access to paid  
17 family leave significantly increases the likelihood  
18 that workers will return to their jobs instead of  
19 dropping out of the workforce or spending time out of  
20 work to search for a new job but paid family leave is  
21 not only an economic benefit. It is also proven to  
22 be a health benefit to parents and babies. High  
23 quality research has found that the introduction of  
24 paid maternity leave in five states led to a  
25 reduction in low birth weight and preterm births.

1  
2 Another study found that mothers were two percent  
3 less likely to report poor mental wellbeing for every  
4 additional week of paid leave they took with their  
5 new child.

6 In 2018, New York State made paid family leave a  
7 mandatory program, where eligible employees are able  
8 to make up to 12 weeks paid family leave at 67  
9 percent of their pay. Furthermore, in 2025, workers  
10 in New York who are pregnant may also have additional  
11 time off available to them for doctors appointments,  
12 procedures and other types of prenatal care. Within  
13 the first four years of implementation of paid family  
14 leave, New York City accounted for the greatest share  
15 of paid family leave transactions, 31 percent of all  
16 claims and 35 percent of all payments. How are these  
17 percentages are less than the city's share of the  
18 state's overall population and private sector  
19 employment during those years, which was 43 percent  
20 and 48 percent respectfully.

21 A 2024 study of New Yorks paid leave program  
22 found that for workers who earn less than \$40,000 per  
23 year only 48 percent of eligible workers claim paid  
24 family leave benefits. It also found that even where  
25 they do make claims for leave, these workers take

1 significantly shorter leaves. Only 7 weeks on  
2 average despite their eligibility for 12 weeks of  
3 leave. These finding suggest that low wage workers  
4 cannot fully benefit from New Yorks current paid  
5 family leave program.  
6

7 While New York has the most expansive paid leave  
8 policy in the country, there is clearly still room  
9 for improvement. Today, we will hear from the  
10 Commission on Gender Equity, the Department of  
11 Citywide Administrative Services, the Department of  
12 Consumer and Worker Protection, and from the public.

13 We will also ask how we are doing in implementing  
14 a strong paid family leave and prenatal leave policy  
15 in New York City.

16 I would like to thank the members of the Women  
17 and Gender Equity Committee who have joined us today.  
18 Council Member Cabán is with us. I would also like  
19 to thank Committee staff Julia Goldsmith-Pinkham,  
20 Katie Salina, Allie Stofer, Florentine Kabore, Taylor  
21 Francisco, Rose Martinez, as well as my own staff  
22 Daniel Heredia, Shubhra Mishra for their work on  
23 today's hearing.  
24  
25

1                   COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY                   7  
2           Before we swear in the Administration, I would  
3 also like to read remarks from Deputy Speaker Diana  
4 Ayala.

5           Good morning and thank you Chair Louis and my  
6 colleagues on the Women and Gender Equity Committee  
7 for giving me the opportunity to speak today at this  
8 important hearing. I am proud to sponsor  
9 Preconsidered T2025-4108 which would require the  
10 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to provide  
11 several kinds of maternal health related information  
12 to two populations.

13           First, the bill would require DOHMH to conduct a  
14 campaign to educate the public on healthy living,  
15 nutrition during and after pregnancy and managing  
16 chronic diseases during and after pregnancy. Healthy  
17 living and proper nutrition during pregnancy are  
18 vital because they ensure proper fetal growth and  
19 development. For the baby, it reduces risk of birth  
20 defects and it can influence a child's health into  
21 adulthood.

22           For the mother, it reduces the risk of  
23 complications. It can also lead to easier post-  
24 partum recovery and it can improve their energy and  
25 wellbeing.

1  
2 Second, the bill would require the DOHMH to  
3 provide information specifically to non - good  
4 morning. Non-option to healthcare providers on  
5 topics aimed at helping them treat pregnant and post-  
6 partum patients, including information on best  
7 practices for caring for patients with chronic  
8 diseases during and after pregnancy. Chronic  
9 diseases can increase risk for infertility, preterm  
10 birth, birth defects, and pregnancy loss during  
11 pregnancy. However, careful proactive management  
12 with the health care team can significantly improve  
13 outcomes for parent and baby giving non obstetric  
14 providers information how common treatment and  
15 medications may specifically effect pregnant and  
16 post-partum individuals with chronic diseases so they  
17 can better weigh the risk against benefits improves  
18 the quality of life - of care sorry, pregnant people  
19 receive. This bill was inspired by the impressive  
20 work of the Speakers maternal health steering  
21 committee, which I have had the honor to serve on  
22 with the Speaker along with advocates, medical  
23 providers, union leaders and elected officials to  
24 confront the city's maternal mortality crisis through  
25



1                   this bill. We hope to improve care for all birthing  
2 people in New York City.  
3

4                   I urge the Administration to support this  
5 legislation and to provide meaningful feedback so  
6 that we can work together to address the ongoing  
7 maternal mortality crisis in this city. I thank the  
8 Chair again for holding today's hearing and for  
9 providing me with time to this statement on this  
10 important topic.

11                   Finally, I would like to remind everyone who  
12 wishes to testify in person today that you must fill  
13 out a witness slip, which you can find on the desk of  
14 the Sergeant at Arms near the entrance of the room.  
15 Please fill out the slip even if you have already  
16 registered in advance that you will be testifying in  
17 person today. If you wish to testify on  
18 Preconsidered T2025-4108, please indicate on the  
19 witness slip whether you are here to testify in favor  
20 of or in opposition to the legislation. I also want  
21 to point out that we will not be voting on any  
22 legislation today to allow as many people as possible  
23 to testify. Testimony will be limited to two minutes  
24 per person, whether you are testifying in person or  
25 on Zoom.

2 I am also going to ask my colleagues to limit  
3 their questions and comments to five minutes. Please  
4 note that witnesses who are here in person will  
5 testify before those who are signed into the Zoom  
6 webinar. I will now turn it over to Women and Gender  
7 Equity Council to administer the oath.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning. In accordance  
9 with the rules of the Council, I will administer the  
10 affirmation to the witnesses. I will call on you  
11 individually for a response. Please raise your right  
12 hands. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole  
13 truth and nothing but the truth before these  
14 committees and respond honestly to Council Member  
15 questions?

16 PANEL: I do. Yes.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Alright, you all may begin.

19 DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you. Good morning Chair  
20 Louis and members of the Committee on Women and  
21 Gender Equity. I am Daniel Pollak, First Deputy  
22 Commissioner at the Office of Labor Relations. I am  
23 joined by Elizabeth Wagoner, Deputy Commissioner for  
24 the Office of Labor Policy & Standards, the  
25 Department of Consumer and Worker Protection, and Ali

2 Rasoulinejad, Assistant Commissioner for Strategic  
3 Planning and Services at the Department of Citywide  
4 Administrative Services division of Human Capital.

5 Thank you for this opportunity to testify today  
6 on the paid family leave and parental leave benefits  
7 available to the city workforce.

8 As with any other leave benefits, paid parental  
9 and family leave is a term and condition of  
10 employment that must be bargained with unions  
11 representing City employees. The past decade has  
12 seen tremendous progress in providing parental and  
13 family leave benefits to City employees through the  
14 collective bargaining process, and through Mayoral  
15 action for non-represented employees.

16 As these benefits have been bargained with  
17 various unions, some differences in different  
18 employee populations have emerged. I would like to  
19 take this opportunity to summarize some of the  
20 different iterations of paid parental and family  
21 leave benefits that have been established over the  
22 last decade or so for City employees.

23 Non-represented City employees, which would be  
24 managers and other non-represented employees were the  
25 first group to receive a paid parental leave benefit

1  
2 in 2015, when they became entitled to six weeks of  
3 fully paid parental leave.

4 In February of 2024, this benefit was expanded to  
5 12-weeks of fully paid leave and these employees were  
6 also opted into the State Paid Family Leave program,  
7 which I will talk about next.

8 The majority of the City's civilian, that's you  
9 know not the uniform forces, employees are covered  
10 through the State's Paid Family Leave program, which  
11 applies to City employees in titles represented by  
12 unions that have bargained to opt into the benefit.  
13 So, you know it's different in the private sector  
14 where presumptively the paid family leave benefit  
15 applies with city employes, uhm the unions have to  
16 bargain to try to opt in if they affirmatively say  
17 they want to be part of this benefit.

18 So, this benefit is funded through a small  
19 payroll deduction determined by the state and  
20 provides up to 12 weeks of job-protected, paid time  
21 off to bond with either a newly born, adopted or  
22 foster child; or to care for a family member with a  
23 serious health condition.

24

25

2 The benefit also applies when a family member is  
3 deployed overseas in a foreign country on active  
4 military duty.

5 Eligible employees taking Paid Family Leave under  
6 the state program receive 67 percent of their average  
7 weekly wage up to a maximum of \$1,177.00 per week in  
8 2025, for up to 12 weeks. That benefit can be taken  
9 intermittently, for up to 60 workdays in total. The  
10 premium deduction rates, where the employee pays on  
11 you know it's deducted from their biweekly paycheck  
12 as well as the average weekly wage levels are  
13 determined by the State each year.

14 So, at this point, most civilian unions have  
15 opted into the State Paid Family Leave program,  
16 making this benefit available to their members. As  
17 of today, approximately 130,000 City employees, which  
18 is about 40 percent of the City's total headcount,  
19 are covered by the State program. Of the City's 150  
20 different collective bargaining units, more than 90  
21 have opted into the program. So, most unions have  
22 looked at this and said that they do want to  
23 participate and opted in.

24 As to utilization, there have been 21,950 Paid  
25 Family Leave claims since the program's inception.

1  
2 According to our insurer MetLife, since January 2025,  
3 so year to date, there's been more than 2,800 PFL  
4 claims have been filed.

5 So, that's the Paid Family Leave benefit, the  
6 state program. Other unions, you know, particularly  
7 those representing teachers, school principals and  
8 administrators, have negotiated their own paid  
9 parental leave benefits. The UFT, you know the  
10 United Federation of Teachers, negotiated 6 weeks of  
11 paid parental leave in 2018, and the Council of  
12 Supervisors and Administrators followed suit and  
13 negotiated 5 weeks of paid parental leave in 2020.

14 Additionally, the Uniformed Sanitation Men's  
15 Association Local 831, which represents Sanitation  
16 Workers, negotiated a paid parental leave benefit for  
17 its membership in the last agreement we reached with  
18 them which was the first paid parental leave benefit  
19 for a uniformed bargaining unit. A sanitation worker  
20 who is a non-birth parent, is eligible to receive  
21 five work days of paid parental leave for the birth,  
22 adoption, or fostering of a child aged six years or  
23 less. The birth parent will be covered by sick leave  
24 under the rules of the department.

1 Including all these programs, the PFL and Paid  
2 Parental Leave, different iterations of that,  
3 approximately 75 percent of the City's workforce is  
4 covered by some form of paid family leave or paid  
5 parental leave, which reflects the tremendous  
6 progress that the city, in partnership with the  
7 unions, has made over the past decade. You know  
8 there is no parental benefit at all or family leave.  
9

10 So, you know we at OLR, along with our partners  
11 at DCAS and FISA-OPA, who we work with to administer  
12 this benefit, are proud of our progress in creating  
13 these benefits, are part of our collaboration with  
14 City unions to get this done. You know this was a  
15 topic that since the PFL put in and was launched,  
16 every union that we've met with, we've talked to them  
17 about what the benefit is, whether they were  
18 interested in it, you know really talked through the  
19 benefits and you know each union then had to make  
20 their own decision about whether this would be in the  
21 best interest of their members. We always remain  
22 ready and willing to discuss these programs with any  
23 union in future collective bargaining and you know  
24 any modifications or adjustments that a union would  
25 be interested in exploring.

2 Thank you for your time, and I will be happy to  
3 address any questions the Committee has.

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for your testimony.  
5 Alright, what is the average duration of leave taken  
6 by public sector employees and if you could share  
7 with us by gender, age, wage level and job category?

8 DANIEL POLLAK: So, we don't have the actual  
9 average duration or by the categories at this time.  
10 You know we can certainly after this hearing you know  
11 do a little more digging and see what we're able to  
12 get but -

13 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: I didn't hear the last part  
14 of what you said.

15 DANIEL POLLAK: After this hearing, we can do  
16 some digging and see what we're able to obtain but  
17 roughly a quarter of employees take the leave  
18 intermittently. So, you know that is a significant  
19 portion that don't take it all at one time. They may  
20 take it intermittently over a longer period and  
21 that's for paid family leave.

22 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Why don't you have that  
23 information today?

24 DANIEL POLLAK: We you know, since we've received  
25 the questions from the Council, we this came with our



1 insurance and with [INAUDIBLE 00:17:15] but there  
2 just wasn't enough time to obtain that information in  
3 time for the hearing.  
4

5 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Can you share with us how  
6 many public sector employees have used any kind of  
7 paid parental leave and if you could break that down  
8 by agency, job category, union status, gender, race?

9 DANIEL POLLAK: Yeah, so since - just talking  
10 about paid family leave since January 2019, there  
11 have been 22,000 claims. We do have some breakdowns  
12 - just one moment. So, what we do have actually so  
13 far what we were able to obtain was for this year to  
14 date, the breakdowns, to get the breakdowns for the  
15 programs inception, we need to go back to the insurer  
16 for information but for example, for this year, it  
17 would have been about 2,800 claims submitted. Uhm,  
18 it's been across 65 different agencies, 82 different  
19 collective bargaining units. 55 percent have been  
20 female, 45 percent have been male, you know and a few  
21 nonbinary.

22 So, that's a breakdown by gender. We do have  
23 breakdowns by union and by agency if you'd like us to  
24 share that with you. If you'd like us to share that  
25 with you, I don't know if it's worth going through

2 every single of the 65 agencies but happy to share  
3 that with the Committee.

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: What paid family leave  
5 through the state's law plan or not available to  
6 municipal workers, do benefits vary by agency? I  
7 know you shared some of it in your testimony with  
8 Sanitation and UFT but can you break that down for  
9 us?

10 DANIEL POLLAK: Sure, so essentially it varies by  
11 union, so that's the defining factor, which you know  
12 sometimes matches the agency, sometimes not and it  
13 varies for a couple reasons. First of all, just  
14 regarding the state program, union to opt in or not.  
15 So, there's a group, 25 percent of city employees,  
16 their unions have decided that you know this isn't a  
17 benefit that is worth it for their members and have  
18 decided not to opt in at all and then we do have a  
19 group of unions that rather than opting into the  
20 state program, decided they would create their own  
21 benefit, whether it's because of the you know the  
22 benefit available, they want a different kind of  
23 benefit.

24 So, the UFT and the CSA are the primary examples  
25 of that. They have fully paid parental leave which

2 is available to their members. They don't have the  
3 paid family leave program. They've not opted into  
4 that. Similarly, non-represented employees have 12  
5 weeks of paid parental leave and are in the paid  
6 family leave program and that was something that  
7 happened in the last year by mayoral action.

8 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: For unions not opted into the  
9 paid family leave, do members take unpaid leave under  
10 FMLA or other unpaid options?

11 DANIEL POLLAK: So, assuming they are entitled  
12 to, you know they, you know every employee is  
13 entitled to FMLA leave. I think it really varies, so  
14 I mentioned a significant portion of the workforce  
15 that has not opted in are in the uniformed forces and  
16 those forces have sick leave so there are certain -  
17 there's a certain amount of leave likely that each of  
18 those agencies a birth parent can take sick leave.  
19 Uhm, but in terms of actual, you know specifics, we  
20 need to look at each agency and to really understand  
21 how much unpaid leave is being taken but they  
22 certainly have the right to. They also have the  
23 right to use their accrued annual leave or  
24 compensatory time which I would think a lot of people  
25

2 take advantage of and you know the various forms of  
3 leave available.

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Among unionized versus  
5 nonunionized workers, are there differences in how  
6 much employees take leave or access supplemental  
7 benefits?

8 DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you for the question. I  
9 think yes, there are differences as I mentioned  
10 nonunionized workers by mayoral action have 12 weeks  
11 of paid parental leave which is you know a different  
12 benefit and they're also covered under the state  
13 program. It's a different benefit than the  
14 representative workers have.

15 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay. Women often pay a  
16 motherhood penalty for taking time off to care for  
17 children while men can receive a fatherhood bonus  
18 because of this unconscious societal expectation that  
19 mothers can be caregivers while fathers are not  
20 expected. Do you track career outcomes after leaves  
21 of absences and what agencies would be best placed to  
22 work on this particular issue?

23 DANIEL POLLAK: Just to clarify, is this a  
24 question related to the municipal workforce or to the  
25 broader city workforce including the private sector?

1                   CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Municipal workforce.

2                   DANIEL POLLAK: So, that's not saying that OLR  
3 tracks in any way. I'm not sure my colleague at DCAS  
4 has anything to add.

5                   ALI RASOULINEJAD: Thank you Chair. Uhm, that's  
6 not in terms of outcome so if folks who have come  
7 back from PFL or PPL, we don't necessarily track  
8 their peer progressions as they go on. You know if  
9 there were you know certain groups that you were  
10 interested in looking at, you know we could try and  
11 see how those titles might -any data within those  
12 titles, how they might progress.

13                   CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: How does the agency recommend  
14 employees work to make sure that employers work to  
15 make sure that women receive equal opportunity for  
16 advancement based off my last question?

17                   ALI RASOULINEJAD: Thank you again for that  
18 question. So, at DCAS, we are - we just - I guess  
19 I'll take a step back and provide kind of like the  
20 larger context. Uhm, you know we provide I don't  
21 know if I'm speaking into this.

22                   Uhm, so we provide support to agency human  
23 resource teams, working closely with OLR, FISO, OPA  
24 and the insurance carrier and that includes providing  
25

1 trainings for our agency human resource  
2 professionals. So, for instance last year, we held  
3 multiple trainings you know a couple of large-scale  
4 trainings for agency personnel officers. We also  
5 hosted a number of coffee series meetings, 16  
6 throughout the year, kind of smaller group trainings  
7 where we covered PFL, PPL, and other lead types in  
8 some of those as well. We also you know just have an  
9 inbox and an open door to agencies on a routine  
10 basis. They contact our citywide personnel policy  
11 office if they have questions related to managing  
12 their workforce on any leave questions, time  
13 questions, etc..

15 This year, we continue to provide trainings. We  
16 actually have one scheduled for tomorrow that we'll  
17 be providing to some agency, HR professionals as  
18 well. So, there's a rolling - you know kind of a  
19 rolling calendar of trainings. We also put and make  
20 available guidelines, PSB's Personnel Service  
21 Bulletins about PFL and PPL processes. So, while  
22 there isn't I would say you know something specific  
23 towards you know a gender or you know an age category  
24 or something to that extent. You know we do kind of  
25 provide ongoing you know rolling training on best

1 practices and policies and procedures regarding both  
2 these leave types.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: And what you just mentioned,  
5 you mentioned several things, trainings, guidelines.  
6 Are those the specific ways that the agency supports  
7 parents returning from caregiving that leave to  
8 return to work and stay in their position, are those  
9 the only ways or are there additional ways that you  
10 all support those parents?

11 ALI RASOULINEJAD: Yeah, so the trainings we  
12 provide are usually or rather are for the agency HR  
13 professionals so I think we had close to 400 agency  
14 HR professionals attend our trainings last year, our  
15 coffee series trainings last year which are the small  
16 group trainings. Uhm, you know we also do provide  
17 working with OLR and the insurance carrier. They are  
18 provided a number of flyers; informational you know  
19 documents. I mean they brain shark videos that folks  
20 can watch online. You know and that's kind of  
21 directly to the city workforce audience.

22 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Are new parents offered part-  
23 time work or adjusted schedules?

24 ALI RASOULINEJAD: So, I think that would be  
25 something with - you know the staffer would work

1 directly with their HR to determine what kind of you  
2 know scheduling or leave type they would be  
3 interested in. Like was mentioned earlier, you know  
4 in addition to the PFL, PPL benefit, there's also  
5 annual leave, comp time, sick leave that employees  
6 may use as appropriate. You know and work around you  
7 know schedule or if there's you know other kind of  
8 provisions that they might be entitled to such as  
9 telework policy, things like that.

11 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: And this question is for any  
12 of you. Have any of you seen a difference or a trend  
13 in the use of parental leave based on the reason for  
14 it, maybe it's meaningful parental bonding, family  
15 caregiving, or medical across the city agencies. Is  
16 there an ongoing trend?

17 DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you for the question. So,  
18 uhm, you know looking at just this year for example,  
19 the claims are about evenly flipped between bonding  
20 and care for a family member. So, I don't currently  
21 have that data going back to inception but currently  
22 it's really almost exactly 50/50 for each reason.  
23 You know I don't also right - now I do actually have  
24 by agency, by reason and just from a quick glance, it  
25 looks around 50/50 for most agencies. So, I'm not



1  
2 seeing any particular trend where one agency is more  
3 for one reason or one more for another reason.

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: According to the Department  
5 of Financial Services, in 2023 32 percent of claims  
6 from New York City for Family Paid Leave came from  
7 workers earning at or above the state average wage of  
8 \$91,374 but only 15 percent claims came from workers  
9 earning less than 40 percent of the state average.

10 That was approximately like \$36,000. In this case,  
11 for city - is this the same case for city employees?

12 Do lower wage city employees use paid family leave  
13 less frequently than higher wage city employees  
14 compared to their share of the workforce?

15 DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you for that question. So,  
16 we don't have a breakdown currently by kind of salary  
17 and it's something that we can see if it's available.  
18 I would say kind of anecdotally, my experience with  
19 bargaining with unions is that unions represent and  
20 more highly paid employees are more hesitant to opt  
21 into the benefit because there is a cap based on the  
22 average weekly wage and that it is actually the kind  
23 of unions who represent lower paid workers that tend  
24 to be more interested in the benefit.

1                    So, you know that's not data, that's anecdotal  
2  
3 but that has been my experience.

4            CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: What benefits stop if a city  
5 employee takes unpaid time off for caregiving  
6 purposes?

7            DANIEL POLLAK: So, when an employee takes unpaid  
8 time off, they would you know there is a child care  
9 leave, unpaid child care leave up to four years is  
10 for most city employees is an option. You do not  
11 maintain your benefits when you are - after your  
12 FMLA runs out so after you've exhausted your 12  
13 weeks of under the Family Mental Leave Act, you don't  
14 maintain any of your benefits. So, you wouldn't  
15 maintain your health insurance or your compensation  
16 or any other benefits.

17           CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: How can the city support  
18 caregivers to take all the time that they need?

19           DANIEL POLLAK: Good question, thank you. I  
20 think you know [INAUDIBLE 00:29:31] DCAS communicates  
21 with agencies but I do know a big part of that is  
22 city unions. You know city unions I think have been  
23 very proud when they've negotiated these benefits and  
24 they fully encourage their employees to use it. You  
25 know for our part, this is not like some other forms

2 of leave like annual leave where it's agency  
3 discretion to approve or not approve it, this is a  
4 right. So, an employee has a right to take this  
5 leave. It can't be you know denied because you know  
6 the agency needs you. Uhm, and it's something that  
7 you know through all our messaging, we have  
8 communicated this is a right. It's something that we  
9 want employees to use when they want to use it and  
10 you know my colleague may be able to speak more to  
11 some of DCAS's efforts.

12 ALI RASOULINEJAD: Thank you for that. Yeah, I  
13 think there- you know there are when agency human  
14 resource teams reach out to us, you know we run  
15 through with them and the possibility is for the  
16 given you know for the staffer who might be  
17 interested in discussing their leave benefits with  
18 the agency. So, you know obviously we're discussing  
19 - we're talking about PPL, PFL right now. After that  
20 you know you would look towards annual leave, you  
21 would look towards sick leave where applicable. You  
22 would also look towards comp time as well.

23 As Dan mentioned, the city's child care leave is  
24 another option which provides job protected leave, on  
25 pay child protected leave and I believe they are -

2 the staff is eligible to pay into Cobra if they'd  
3 like to continue their health benefit as well through  
4 that. And so, that's for up to 48 months or 4 years.  
5 You know you could also look at a leave of absence  
6 you know and some employees who contribute to one of  
7 the sick leave banks may also be eligible to take out  
8 sick leave; take out leave from the banks as well.

9 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. We've been joined  
10 by Council Member Gutiérrez. How many people have  
11 used unpaid child care leave?

12 DANIEL POLLAK: I don't believe we have that  
13 information right now but we can follow up and get  
14 that to you.

15 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: New York State paid family  
16 leave was implemented at least in part to combat  
17 gender disparities when it comes to employment  
18 issues, yet these disparities persist with  
19 significantly fewer men taken PFL than women. How  
20 many agencies promoting or talking about the PFL with  
21 people of all genders?

22 DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you for that question Chair  
23 Louis. You know I will say that I think the city  
24 seems to be at least from this years data, doing  
25 their job on that front. You know as I mentioned

1  
2 about currently this year, about 55 percent of the  
3 claims are female. About 45 percent are male and I  
4 think the workforce generally uhm, the city's  
5 workforce generally is majority female. So, I think  
6 those numbers are probably consistent with the total  
7 city workforce.

8 So, whatever disparity there is in the private  
9 sector it seems you know at least from this year that  
10 you know you're not seeing that in the city.

11 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Alright, this question is for  
12 DCWP. How many complaints or violations about  
13 prenatal leave have been reported in New York City  
14 and if you could also share any patterns by industry,  
15 wage level or employer size?

16 ELIZABETH WAGONER: So, just for background to  
17 answer the question, the City's Paid Safe and Sick  
18 Leave law, which has been in existence for almost 11  
19 years now allows workers to use their paid safe and  
20 sick leave for prenatal care reasons. That has been  
21 the case since the inception of the law. What  
22 changed in January of this year was the state added  
23 separate bank of paid prenatal leave. That's in  
24 addition to the 40 or 56 hours of regular paid safe  
25

2 and sick leave, the additional 20 hours for prenatal  
3 care.

4 So, when that went into effect, we began tracking  
5 complaints based on that are just about prenatal  
6 leave. We've gotten 13 since January and uhm, you  
7 know our sort of typical practice in those cases is  
8 to you know talk with the worker and with the workers  
9 permission, you know once we get a sense of what's  
10 going on to reach out to the employer, to inform the  
11 employer you know the law just changed, there's a  
12 separate bank of leave. Usually, what employees are  
13 saying is you know they're making me use my regular  
14 sick leave bank instead of this separate new bank of  
15 leave and that tends to resolve it. You know the  
16 employers you know aren't necessarily aware that the  
17 law just changed, so that's how we typically handle  
18 those.

19 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Is the agency creating some  
20 type of campaign or structure to make sure that  
21 everyone is aware?

22 ELIZABETH WAGONER: Yeah, we've done a great deal  
23 of work on this. You know obviously we were very  
24 excited you know when the law changed, you know it's  
25 something that employees really need so that they're

1 not using up all their sick leave you know going to  
2 obtain prenatal care.

3  
4 So, when the law changed, you know in addition to  
5 you know altering our internal procedures to make  
6 sure we had a system for fast tracking those  
7 investigations and those you know handling those  
8 complaints to make sure we're helping the person you  
9 know while they're pregnant and able to immediately  
10 access that bank of leave.

11 We've also updated all of our employer materials.  
12 So, employers are required to give employees at  
13 higher and also post on the wall a notice of employee  
14 rights that we publish that's about their right to  
15 paid safe and sick leave. We added prenatal leave to  
16 that, so it's clear to employees at hire and then  
17 available to them you know on the wall what their  
18 right to paid prenatal leave is. We also have done  
19 extensive outreach work to ensure that New Yorkers  
20 are aware of their rights.

21 We - in 2025, we conducted 190 worker events,  
22 that includes presentations, tabling's, canvassing,  
23 reaching about 26,000 attendees. We've conducted 98  
24 presentations reaching 6,000 New Yorkers including  
25 information on the right to paid prenatal leave.

1 Uhm, we also held a day of action where our team  
2 visited some of the busiest transportation terminals  
3 and distributed information and our worker bill of  
4 rights to more than 6,000 New Yorkers.  
5

6 Our Worker Bill of Rights contains information  
7 about paid prenatal leave as well as paid family  
8 leave and all the sort of key employee rights that  
9 people have. We've also done outreach to lawyers  
10 that represent employees and employers to make sure  
11 they're aware of those rights. That includes things  
12 like publications and the New York Law Journal  
13 presentations to lawyer groups and then we've sent  
14 out email blasts to 59 community boards and over  
15 1,700 community organizations and business  
16 associations to educate and remind New Yorkers of the  
17 right to prenatal leave. So, this is really  
18 important to us that people get - uhm are aware of  
19 this right.

20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: So, it appears that there's a  
21 mechanism in place but I'm thinking about the  
22 employee that is not tapped into the community board,  
23 didn't attend the workers rights event and all of  
24 that. How can they submit a complaint or a claim to  
25 a person that's not involved, that's not typically



2 engaged. It's not reading the information right  
3 there on the wall. How else can they make a  
4 complaint?

5 ELIZABETH WAGONER: Absolutely. So, by calling  
6 311 and saying sick leave. That's one of the key  
7 words or prenatal leave. They're going to get routed  
8 right to our intake line and they can speak to a live  
9 person who can explain their right to prenatal leave  
10 and get that complaint fast tracked to an  
11 investigator who can get in touch with the worker.  
12 You know and again, we're fast tracking those, so you  
13 know it's going to be getting to an investigator that  
14 same week to get in touch with that worker.

15 People can also just Googling the information.  
16 You know we're at [nyc.gov/workers](http://nyc.gov/workers) and we have  
17 information on our website where people can learn  
18 about their rights and file a complaint online. So,  
19 we try to make it as easy as possible for people to  
20 reach us.

21 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Uhm you mentioned 13  
22 complaints.

23 ELIZABETH WAGONER: That's right to date.

24 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: How many workers have  
25 reported retaliation? Is that within the 13

1                   COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY                   34  
2       complaints? Does that include reduced hours,  
3       termination, after requesting or using paid leave?

4           ELIZABETH WAGONER: So, on our paid prenatal  
5       leave cases, those tend not to be - or just haven't  
6       been retaliation cases. Those are - they're making  
7       me use the wrong bank kind of situations.

8           CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay.

9           ELIZABETH WAGONER: We certainly do get  
10       retaliation complaints for paid safe and sick leave  
11       generally, not necessarily specific to you know these  
12       specific complaints about this new right. Uhm, that  
13       does happen. We take retaliation very seriously. We  
14       also fast track retaliation complaints, where the  
15       worker wants to be returned back to their job and  
16       reinstated. You know we do have the power to -  
17       through our enforcement processes, require an  
18       employer to reinstate a worker when they fired the  
19       worker in retaliation for using paid safe and sick  
20       leave.

21           CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Will the complaints and the  
22       information within those complaints be added in the  
23       PMMR next year?

24           ELIZABETH WAGONER: Uhm we, I'm trying to think.  
25       We uh, they're tracked as paid safe and sick leave

1 cases. The reason we are able to enforce the state  
2 law is because the state amended their sick leave law  
3 to say to add this separate bank. And so, our city  
4 sick leave law says whenever the state offers a  
5 higher benefit, it's automatically incorporated. And  
6 so, it's all within the category of sick leave and  
7 that's where those would all be subsumed. However,  
8 we do on our website independently report all  
9 complaints, all allegations we receive in complaints.  
10 And so, those breakdowns would be in the report we  
11 publish on our website annually.

12  
13 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Right, I'm going to hand it  
14 over to Council Member Gutiérrez who has questions.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much  
16 Chair. Thank you all for coming. I'm going to ask a  
17 couple questions and I apologize if they were asked  
18 already, and I think Chair Louis may have referenced  
19 this in her line of questioning.

20 Do you have a sense of the data for eligible  
21 workers in New York City? How many of them are  
22 actually using the paid family leave and prenatal  
23 leave? Do you have a sense of that?

24 ELIZABETH WAGONER: So, we do not track  
25 information about the private sector workforce and

1  
2 the number of workers who would be using any of these  
3 benefits. There's no sort of reporting about that  
4 that comes to us.

5 My colleagues though I believe do have some  
6 information about that with respect to the New York  
7 City workforce, sorry the public workforce.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: That's right, thank  
9 you.

10 DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you. Yeah, so the public  
11 sector workforce, looking at paid family leave, this  
12 year to date, there have been about 2,800 paid family  
13 leave claims and in terms of since the inception of  
14 the program, in around January of 2019, there have  
15 been about 22,000 PFL claims. We've also had for the  
16 non-represented city employees who have their own  
17 paid parental leave program, since that started in  
18 2015, we've had about 3,300 cases of paid parental  
19 leave and that's a population of roughly 15,000 to  
20 20,000 people at any one time so over ten years, over  
21 3,000 have used that benefit.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Got it and is there  
23 any - thank you for those numbers. Is there any  
24 sense that anyone who in the public sector  
25

2 specifically if anyone that is eligible is not taking  
3 parental or prenatal leave?

4 DANIEL POLLAK: Uhm, so you know with parental  
5 leave uhm, but uhm there's nothing that you know I'm  
6 aware of out there that would indicate it. I think  
7 anecdotally, the paid parental leave that's available  
8 to non-represented employees, my experience is that  
9 almost everyone takes it. The paid family leave I  
10 think you know more of for employees, there's more of  
11 you know calculation of, is it worth it given that  
12 it's not kind of a full wage replacement, it's at 67  
13 percent of your wages.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay and then my next  
15 question is for city agencies. Uhm, is there a way  
16 that they are integrating or sharing data with the  
17 state to track the paid family leave and prenatal  
18 leave usage?

19 DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you for the question. Just  
20 for point of clarification, the prenatal leave law  
21 doesn't apply to the city, to city workers. It  
22 doesn't apply to the public sector, so we can really  
23 only speak to paid family leave and paid parental  
24 leave.

2 In terms of whether we share information with the  
3 state, I'm not sure if my colleague from DCAS is  
4 aware of it. You know we do have an insurer who  
5 participates in the state program, so I think it may  
6 be shared through the insurer but I'm not aware if we  
7 directly share it.

8 ALI RASOULINEJAD: Yeah, I think it's through the  
9 insurer that it's shared.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, uhm is there any  
11 technology gap preventing us from understanding the  
12 full level of compliance in New York City? Is there  
13 any issue operationally there? Any challenge?

14 ELIZABETH WAGONER: I think my hesitation in  
15 saying that there's no barrier would be I'm just not  
16 sure that anybody is reporting that to any -

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: We don't know what we  
18 don't know yet.

19 ELIZABETH WAGONER: And uhm, you know it strikes  
20 me as potentially quite burdensome to have such a  
21 requirement or such a reporting requirement.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Burdensome for the  
23 private sector?

24 ELIZABETH WAGONER: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And then my  
3 last question is regarding, I was able to read the  
4 testimony, really encouraged by - and I know that  
5 this is obviously up to the individual unions and  
6 their negotiations. I just have like a general  
7 question but I am encouraged by you know, the  
8 Sanitation Association, the teachers, UFT, CSA, I'm  
9 obviously encouraged by that. Obviously we want to  
10 see more. What I didn't see here and I didn't hear  
11 in the testimony was for the Police Department. Do  
12 you know or can you share if there is some sense of  
13 negotiation for extended periods of prenatal leave or  
14 family leave for folks in the Police Department?

15 DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you for that question  
16 Council Member. So, first I just want to say for -  
17 there are some employees in the Police Department who  
18 are represented by DC37 for instance who are entitled  
19 to the PFL benefits when you think of like our 911  
20 operators, they are entitled to paid family leave.  
21 When you talk about kind of the police officers and  
22 superiors, none of those unions have yet kind of -  
23 it's floored with in bargaining any kind of paid  
24 parental leave or paid family leave benefit. You  
25 know we are not really yet in the next round of

2 bargaining so I can't say obviously what's going to  
3 happen but to date, that's not something that has  
4 really been floored with them.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: So, I'll just and  
6 thank you and thank you for your response. I think  
7 that that's right. I will just say this because it's  
8 important I think for us to have it on the record in  
9 conversations with members of the PD, Police Officers  
10 for example, many who are women and do need this time  
11 off and many who are spouses and partners, that that  
12 is a desire. That is not for anyone here to figure  
13 out but I do want to make sure it's reflected in the  
14 record when those negotiations do come up because  
15 that is just the reality. We are also seeing more  
16 women in the workforce, so naturally this is a  
17 benefit that we want to expand to PD as well. So,  
18 thank you all for your responses. Thank you Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: A few more questions. With  
20 significantly fewer men taking PFL than women, how  
21 are employers promoting or taking or talking about  
22 the PFL with people of all genders in either  
23 agencies?

24 DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you for that question  
25 again. So, I guess I would say you know one, besides



1           the outreach we've discussed to our you know agency  
2           human resource professionals and the trainings we do  
3           for them and the materials that are posted online and  
4           you know written and in video format, you know thanks  
5           to actually the Council's leadership, you know we've  
6           implemented career counselors at each agency. And  
7           so, you know folks who are interested in kind of  
8           discussing the impact of leaves on their career and  
9           their future trajectories can work with their career  
10          counselors on that. And sorry, can you repeat the  
11          question? I want to make sure I'm not getting off  
12          track.  
13

14           CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Yeah, I'll start from the  
15          beginning. With significantly fewer men taking PFL  
16          than women, how are employers promoting or talking  
17          about the PFL with people of all genders.

18           DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you. So, you know  
19          employees are welcome to obviously speak with their  
20          career counselors who then engage in follow-up and by  
21          the local law with the employees who reach out. As  
22          well, the city is conducting partnership with OLR or  
23          conducts you know multiple surveys of the workforce  
24          including an upcoming caregiver survey and collecting  
25          feedback on the experience of our workforce.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Have either of your agencies  
3 received any feedback surrounding restrictions of the  
4 PFL program?

5 DANIEL POLLAK: My agency is not you know, I  
6 haven't heard - no.

7 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: No. In what ways can the PFL  
8 program be improved to better protect and enhance the  
9 daily economic lives of New Yorkers?

10 DANIEL POLLAK: Thank you for that question. I  
11 think you know it really depends. I think - you know  
12 one thing you see of the city workforce that I've  
13 tried to focus on is that you know there really are a  
14 lot of different, so many different groups of  
15 employees, all with different needs and you know I  
16 think the reason the law left it up to each  
17 individual union was that they each have their own  
18 priorities and their own kind of like thoughts about  
19 what their members need based on what they're hearing  
20 from their members. You know just, there is always  
21 room for improvement and modification. As an  
22 example, uhm, you know the United Federation of  
23 Teachers, the initial benefit was that if you had two  
24 parents who were teachers, you know if both parents  
25 were teachers, that they can only take it those six

2 weeks combined, even though a single parent takes the  
3 leave, essentially you know they had to decide.  
4 Would one take all six weeks, would one take four  
5 weeks and the other two?

6 In our last agreement, we modified that to make  
7 it 12 weeks, so that they could each take the full  
8 six weeks.

9 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Right.

10 DANIEL POLLAK: So, I think we are always open to  
11 modifications and changes and improvements but you  
12 know generally we really try to defer to the unions  
13 and what they're hearing from their members, that  
14 would kind of enhance the benefits in a way that  
15 they're interested in exploring.

16 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Do you have any  
17 more questions? No, alright. So, thank you all for  
18 being here today and for being a part of this  
19 conversation. Your panel is excused. Thank you.

20 I now open the hearing for public testimony. I  
21 remind members of the public that this is government  
22 proceeding and that decorum shall be observed at all  
23 times. As such, members of the public shall remain  
24 silent at all times. The witness table is reserved  
25 for people who wish to testify and no video recording

1 or photography is allowed from the witness table.  
2  
3 Further, members of the public may not present audio  
4 or video recordings as testimony but may submit  
5 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at  
6 Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

7 If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please  
8 fill out an appearance slip with the Sergeant at Arms  
9 and wait to be recognized.

10 When recognized, you will have two minutes to  
11 speak on today's oversight topic and/or legislation.  
12 If you have written testimony or additional - sorry,  
13 if you have a written statement or additional written  
14 testimony you wish to submit for the record, please  
15 provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at  
16 Arms. You may also email written testimony to  
17 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) within 72 hours of this  
18 hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be  
19 accepted.

20 I would like to call the first panel,  
21 Christopher Leon Johnson. And also, is there anyone  
22 here that would like to testify? You may begin.

23 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, hello Chair  
24 Louis, Chair Gutiérrez. My name is Christopher Leon  
25 Johnson.

1  
2 First off, I noticed kind of on topic, I hope  
3 that you join the bill Intro. 1132 to stop  
4 deactivation on deliverista, I hope you jump on the  
5 bill. And I know it's not the topic but that's my  
6 advice.

7 Alright, so about paid parental family leave, I  
8 think that the City Council needs to start finding a  
9 way to protect non-union employees because this type  
10 of stuff hurts non-union employees the most because  
11 if a person decides to take parental leave and  
12 they're a nonunion employee, they might not have a  
13 job when they come back. There's always some excuse.  
14 So, I'm calling on the City Council to find a way to  
15 protect non-union employees with paid parental leave  
16 in the City Council.

17 Unions don't have to worry about that because  
18 unions will come outside City Hall and fight the  
19 Council Members and they try to say, we're ain't  
20 going to do anything but when it comes to non-union  
21 employees they have the will of the employer, they're  
22 at the mercy of the employer and I'm calling on the  
23 City Council to find a way with the Labor Committee,  
24 De La Rosa to implement a bill to give them more

1  
2 protections, more than union members because non-  
3 union employees don't have protections like unions.

4 I understand that there are a lot of nonunion  
5 jobs out there and we need them but they need the  
6 same protections as uhm, union employees too. So,  
7 but when it comes to that, just making clear that we  
8 have to protect nonunion employees. We have to make  
9 sure that when they come back on the job, they have a  
10 job and there shouldn't be an excuse of like oh,  
11 since you left about two or three months, you can't  
12 come back or oh, the spot is already filled.

13 Employees have to lie. I used to work security. I  
14 worked for nonunion security companies or nonunion  
15 jobs and I've seen like a story - I know 15 seconds  
16 on the clock, that where a guard was on parental  
17 leave - was pregnant and then somebody complained on  
18 the job of her being pregnant and they kicked her off  
19 the site. Say I'm sitting down and I'm pregnant and  
20 you're standing up and since I'm pregnant I sit down  
21 and then the person that was standing up was  
22 complaining about the person; me sitting down because  
23 I'm pregnant and they pulled her off the jobsite.

24 So, I'm going- I'm telling the City Council to  
25 protect that. Make that happen. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for your advocacy.

3 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, no  
4 problem, thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: This panel is dismissed.  
6 Seeing no one else is here to testify and no one  
7 online is here to testify; this hearing is now  
8 adjourned. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date October 3, 2025