Over the span of a career, most adults need time away from work to care for a new child, a family member, or for their own health. The majority of California workers contribute to the state’s paid family leave and state disability insurance programs and are eligible for paid time off as care needs arise.

Policymakers temporarily increased payment rates for these programs in 2018 from 55% of earnings to 70% for workers with very low pay and about 60% of earnings for all other workers, including full-time workers paid the minimum wage. Yet, California’s benefits still fall short of those offered by most other similar state programs.

State policymakers must act or payment rates will revert to just 55% of earnings at the end of 2022. Low payment rates block access to paid time off — especially for workers with low wages who are disproportionately women, Black, and Latinx. Californians should never have to choose between paying the bills and caring for themselves or their family.