

*Liz Morris Testimony*  
*AB 1119: Labor and Employment Committee Hearing*  
*April 8, 2021*

- Good afternoon, and thank you. My name is Liz Morris; I'm the Deputy Director for the Center for WorkLife Law.
- As we just heard from Alma Farias, far too many workers with family responsibilities have been in crisis over the last year when the professional care providers that they rely on to get to work have been temporarily unavailable because of covid-19.
- Mothers, in particular, have been devastated, with the harshest impacts on women of color, single mothers, and workers in low-paying jobs. Not only have they suffered, but their children have suffered too, many with homelessness, food insecurity, and other plagues of poverty.
- During the pandemic, working people who are also caring for young children, the elderly, and family members with disabilities have faced heart-wrenching choices – between providing adequate care for their loved ones and keeping the paying jobs they need to survive. But these choices are not new – discrimination against family caregivers existed long before the pandemic, and it will undoubtedly continue unless we take affirmative steps to address it.
- And California *is behind* in addressing it. Nearly 30% of the American workforce is *already* protected by a state or local law that prohibits discrimination against employees with caregiving responsibilities. California workers are left out.
- The experience of these other states shows that family responsibilities discrimination laws **work** for employees and businesses alike by encouraging employers to treat family caregivers based on their job performance - instead of bias, which has the power to both save jobs and avoid lawsuits.

- AB eleven-nineteen is imperative for California's economic recovery. It will ensure family caregivers –typically women – are able to participate fully in the workforce. Fulfilling family responsibilities is not a private frolic. It is the hard and necessary work of caring for the elderly and people with disabilities, and raising the next generation of workers that will keep our economy running.