

WorkLife Law Annual Report

2025-2026



Message From the Co-Directors

Dear Friend of WorkLife Law,

WorkLife Law's efforts to secure justice for working people and students who are pregnant, postpartum, or caring for family members took on new dimensions this year, as we found ourselves defending federal rights we previously took for granted, while at the same time expanding what's possible in states and communities.

At the federal level, we've been protecting the progress our movement fought so hard to achieve. From defending the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act against efforts to gut its protections, to challenging the Department of Labor's efforts to narrow which workers are protected by the PUMP Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act, we have fought to ensure major civil rights laws deliver their full promise to the people who need them most.

As challenging as the federal landscape has been, this year also brought victories that remind us progress is always possible. **The first lawsuits under the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and the PUMP Act were tried, and workers won both.** Our team is proud to have helped pass these landmark laws, shaped their regulations, and trained and supported the attorneys who made these victories possible.

At the state and community levels, the energy and opportunities we've seen give us hope. This year, we helped implement new family caregiver protections in Illinois, advanced the growing movement to protect NICU parents, and celebrated new milestones in the fights for paid family leave and menopause protections. We secured wins to safeguard our immigrant neighbors by advocating for their right to safely access family and medical leave. And we expanded our training and technical assistance programs for community organizers, healthcare providers, and advocates—partnerships that exponentially multiply our reach and build infrastructure that outlasts any single policy battle. **This year alone, we've trained over 5,000 people, who will in turn help others in their communities.**

This report offers a snapshot of what our work looks like in practice—rights enforced, communities equipped, and lives changed. We invite you to read on and imagine with us a world where all that we're fighting for today is simply taken for granted tomorrow.

With gratitude,

Jessica Lee and Liz Morris
Co-Directors, WorkLife Law



Our Team



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Co-Director



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Affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.

Our Approach

WorkLife Law is a national advocacy and research organization that advances gender and racial equity by strengthening legal rights for pregnant people and family caregivers. Our work seeks to ensure all people have the freedom to build and maintain economic security through employment and educational opportunities, without having to sacrifice their health or their loved ones' care.



We provide direct services that ground everything we do.

Through our free legal helpline, we give support to workers and students that changes lives. The lessons we learn from the people we serve – across industries, geographies, and income levels – are the foundation for our broader work to create systemic change.

We empower people to access their rights.

We educate workers and students about their rights while equipping healthcare providers, employers, attorneys, and community organizations to support them. We also work to build systems that ensure those rights are within reach of the people who need them most.

We build legal rights.

Fueled by our groundbreaking research and direct service experience, we engage in legislative and regulatory advocacy; provide technical guidance to government officials responsible for interpreting and enforcing legal rights; and offer litigation support that shapes the future meaning of the law.

Championing Pregnant, Postpartum, and Lactating Workers

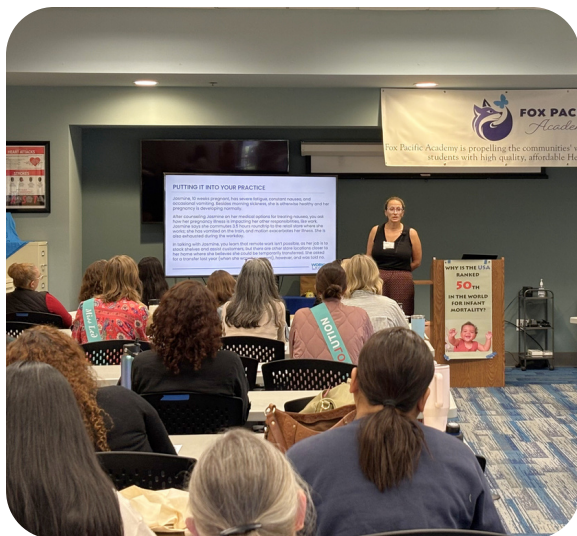
Making workplace protections during pregnancy and postpartum accessible to everyone—particularly communities who have long faced exclusion—is core to WorkLife Law's mission. This year, tens of thousands of workers accessed our resources online to help them assert their rights. For workers who didn't find us that way, we advocated at every level to advance access to justice. We trained healthcare providers and community leaders whom workers already trust, reached out to people in the languages they speak, equipped attorneys nationwide to enforce these rights in court, and advised the government officials who write enforceable regulations about the real-world needs of the workers we serve.

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act reduces miscarriages by 9.6%.

Parents with adequate lactation breaks and space, which the PUMP Act requires, are 2.3 times as likely to keep breastfeeding after returning to work.

EQUIPPING HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS TO SUPPORT PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM PATIENTS

Typically, accommodations and leave aren't provided without the blessing of a worker's healthcare provider. And many of the most vulnerable workers rely on community health workers as trusted intermediaries to navigate complex legal and bureaucratic systems, particularly when language barriers or fears over immigration status make seeking outside help daunting. For these reasons, WorkLife Law activates its vast network of healthcare partners to connect with pregnant and postpartum workers—most won't seek out a lawyer, but almost all will seek out healthcare.



This year, we're proud to have trained over a thousand healthcare professionals, giving them tools to educate patients and support requests for leave and accommodations. These providers serve an estimated 100,000 patients annually.

Additionally, 136 community health workers completed our multi-day training series designed to help them support the most marginalized. A study of our program shows that these community changemakers will reach over 6,000 pregnant workers in just the first six months following their training.

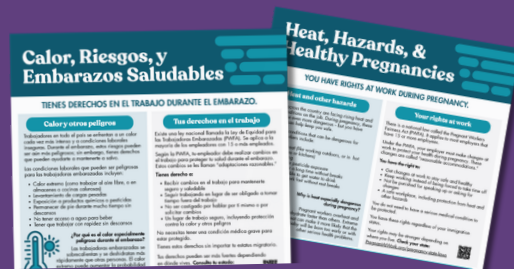
EMPOWERING THE MOST VULNERABLE WORKERS

Language barriers, immigration fears, and workplace power imbalances keep many workers from accessing the rights and benefits they've earned. WorkLife Law's language justice initiative and our [Dar a Luz program](#) for pregnant and postpartum farmworkers dismantle these barriers at both the systemic and community levels.

Our engagement with the California EDD, the state agency that administers paid leave, delivered changes to ensure undocumented workers remain able to safely access the family and medical leave benefits they pay for. Through Senior Staff Attorney Juliana Franco's role as Vice Chair of the EDD's Multilingual Access Advisory Committee, we also advocated for improved access for Indigenous language speakers and deaf and hard-of-hearing workers. **The agency, which serves over three million workers annually, is now adopting video interpretation services as a result of our work.**

At the community level, [Dar a Luz](#) launched [audio guides](#) in Indigenous languages on farmworkers' rights to take paid time off to avoid pesticides during pregnancy—reaching CA farmworkers in their native languages for the first time.

Protecting pregnant workers from the dangers of extreme heat



Extreme heat poses risks for all workers but is especially dangerous during pregnancy. As temperatures rise, pregnant workers are increasingly vulnerable to unsafe work conditions. With a deepened focus on heat this year, we co-produced [new bilingual resources](#) with National COSH, including a factsheet and webinar designed to keep workers safe.

BRINGING EXPERTISE ON PREGNANCY AND PAID LEAVE PROTECTIONS TO CALIFORNIA'S CIVIL RIGHTS COUNCIL



WorkLife Law was invited to [address the California Civil Rights Council](#)—the state body responsible for drafting and adopting regulations to enforce California's powerful anti-discrimination laws. Several Council members were recently appointed, and our presentation was their first discussion on the leave and accommodation laws they are now charged with interpreting.

The Council's decisions impact millions of California workers and influence how states across the country approach anti-discrimination, paid leave, and accommodation protections for pregnant people and caregivers. We are proud to partner with the Council to shape this impact for the better.

WORKLIFE LAW ATTORNEY NETWORK: SHAPING WORKERS' RIGHTS

The passage of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and PUMP Act brought generational advances in the employment rights of pregnant and lactating workers, but our advocacy is far from over. From cases determining whether PWFA and PUMP are constitutional to court opinions interpreting what employers must provide under the new laws, WorkLife Law is shaping judicial decisions that will set legal precedent to protect families for decades to come.

WorkLife Law is a leader in preserving and advancing these hard-fought rights, including through partnerships with the members of our vast Attorney Network. Key highlights from this year include:

- Building our Attorney Network membership by over 20%, serving litigators across 40 states
- Launching the Attorney Network Resource Hub—which has already provided hundreds of litigators with expert insight to guide their cases
- Training over 500 attorneys on how to use the laws to protect workers, from California and New York to Kansas and Texas
- Providing technical litigation assistance to strengthen targeted cases in over two dozen states—including providing claim development, brief writing support, and oral argument preparation
- Celebrating the members of our Attorney Network who secured the first legal victories under PUMP and PWFA



Jessica Lee presenting at the 2025 California Employment Lawyers Association conference.

We're proud to have Katz Banks Kumin LLP, King & Siegel LLP, and Sanford Heisler Sharp McKnight, LLP as founding sponsors of the Attorney Network Resource Hub.

“When we started litigating this case, there was almost no guidance available. WorkLife Law’s trainings gave us a very strong foundation to build from.”

– Janelle Osowski, WLL Attorney Network Member responsible for first PUMP Act verdict

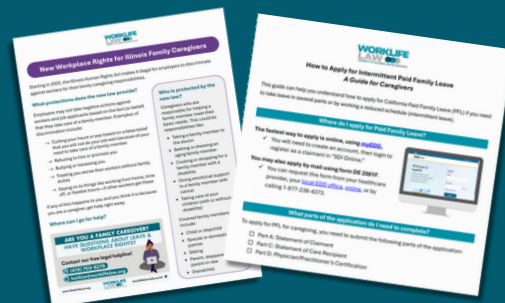
Supporting Family Caregivers

Countless workers face an impossible choice: showing up for their families or keeping their jobs. WorkLife Law is at the forefront of changing that.

This year, we launched new resources to educate policymakers, advocates, and workers about caregivers' rights:

- Our [family caregiver resource hub](#) gives workers the information they need to access leave, accommodations, and protection from discrimination at work—including our new FMLA eligibility quiz.
- WorkLife Law's [family caregiver policy hub](#) supports advocates as they push for stronger workplace protections in their state. The policy hub includes updated model legislation, supportive research, fact sheets, and sample advocacy materials.

New Resources on State Protections



Our series of [California guides](#) explains how to access paid leave for family caregiving. Our [Illinois factsheet](#) helps caregivers use new [anti-discrimination protections](#) that WorkLife Law helped secure.



Leah Kennedy after testifying before the California Senate's Governmental Organization Committee.

WorkLife Law also resources our community partners to support caregivers. For example, we're partnering with the Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center to deliver legal services to low-income caregivers. Hundreds attended our "Ask an Attorney" sessions and used our guides to get their legal questions answered and access the paid leave they earned. And our partnership with Unbuckled—an organization supporting caregivers of children facing severe illness or disability—has now served caregivers in ten states, helping parents be there for their children when it matters most.

This year, our team continued to advocate for flexible work accommodations that are critical to so many people navigating family care and work. In California, we testified in the state Senate to support AB 1729, which aims to modernize the state's telework policy. We made the case that remote work is a gender justice imperative, as blanket return-to-office mandates drive women out of the workforce.

Protecting Pregnant and Parenting Students' Access to Education

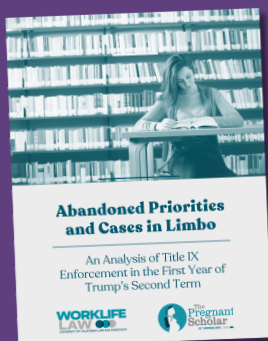
WorkLife Law launched its Pregnant Scholar initiative in 2015 as the country's first legal resource center on the rights of pregnant and parenting students. This year, WorkLife Law continued its advocacy for policy changes that support the millions of pregnant and parenting students pursuing higher education—a population that is mostly women and majority people of color.

As the federal Department of Education has been effectively gutted, we've re-focused our advocacy at the state level, collaboratively paving the way for the passage of new laws in Virginia and Maryland, and advancing ongoing efforts to enact groundbreaking legislation in New York and California. We equipped student parent and gender justice advocates across the country to win new protections by working with partners to create the State Policy Toolkit for Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Students. The Toolkit provides legislative priorities for advocates to consider, model bill language, and talking points. The policy priorities we identified are based on our real-world experience counseling hundreds of pregnant and parenting students and supporting college administrators to meet these students' needs.

Where legal rights already exist, our free helpline served students from around the country seeking accommodations and leave for pregnancy and childbirth. Our assistance not only ensures having a baby doesn't derail a student's education, but it also gives us an opportunity to educate academic institutions about their legal obligations under Title IX. We also offered trainings and technical assistance to administrators and staff from dozens of colleges and universities nationwide. **This year, WorkLife Law attorneys directly supported institutions that serve over a million students across twenty states.**



Jessica Lee presenting alongside Ewa Obatuase of New America.



Our report, Abandoned Priorities and Cases in Limbo: An Analysis of Title IX Enforcement in the First Year of Trump's Second Term, found that the Department of Education has effectively ceased investigating Title IX student complaints—including complaints of pregnancy discrimination. The report is inspiring states to enact their own protections to ensure students can pursue their education regardless of their pregnancy or family status.

Providing Free Legal Support



Most workers can't afford a lawyer. WorkLife Law's free legal helpline means they don't have to. Our attorneys give callers information about their legal rights and provide them with assistance to secure leave and accommodations, as well as offer support in responding to discrimination. WorkLife Law lawyers intervene early on behalf of workers and students with their employers and academic institutions to prevent harm to their economic security and health, and hopefully to avoid escalation. **Nine out of ten workers who call us get the accommodations they need without filing a legal complaint.** We also assist callers in filing charges with government agencies and connect them with attorneys in their states when filing a lawsuit becomes necessary.

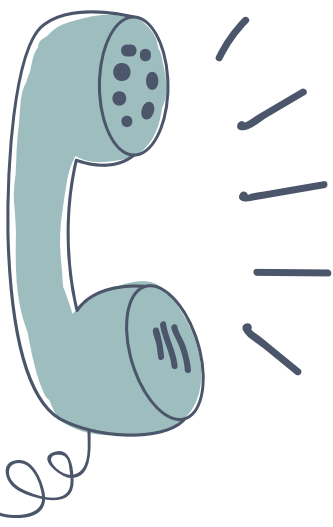
DEMAND FOR WORKLIFE LAW'S HELPLINE HAS NEVER BEEN HIGHER

This year—our busiest in more than 20 years—call volume nearly doubled, with callers reaching us from 46 states and DC.

In addition to providing life-changing assistance to the individuals we help, our interactions with helpline callers afford us insights, resonant stories, and a real-world understanding that informs and strengthens WorkLife Law's policy advocacy, changing the lives of millions.

KB called WorkLife Law's helpline desperate to keep her job. Together we ended up changing countywide policy.

A physical therapist recovering from a postpartum mental health condition, KB needed additional time off work. But her employer, a large county government, tried to force her back before her doctor recommended. Desperate to protect both her health and her job, she called WorkLife Law's helpline. After we educated KB's employer about its obligation, it not only restored her leave, but it went further by updating its countywide policy to protect all future employees from the same illegal practice.



“Contacting [WorkLife Law’s] Pregnant Scholar helpline was a breath of fresh air. For the first time in this process, someone truly listened, reminded me that what I was fighting for was real and important, and most of all, that I wasn’t alone.”

“Thank you so much for being our voice and taking our concerns to a level that gets attention and follow up.”

Press Highlights



**The
New York
Times**

“ Nine times out of 10... [WorkLife Law] staff can help hotline callers get accommodations. But the volume of women struggling to get accommodations means that even one in 10 adds up. ”

Co-Director Liz Morris in “3 Years After a Landmark Law, Some Pregnant Workers Still Don’t Get Basic Accommodations”

THE 19th*

“ It seems to me that their goal is using Title IX for their own purposes and not to bring justice for these students who have asked for help, which is just appalling. ”

Co-Director Jessica Lee in “90% of student discrimination and harassment complaints were dismissed last year. Here’s why.”

**THE
Nation.**

“ I am not aware of another large employer that has so blatantly and comprehensively ignored the requirements of the new law [like Amazon has]. ”

Co-Director Liz Morris in “No One Heard Me at Amazon”

**THE
SACRAMENTO
BEE**

“ One-size-fits-all return-to-office mandates drive women from the workforce. ”

Leah Kennedy in “CA state worker telework bill gains momentum in Legislature as RTO deadline looms”

Thanks to Our Supporters

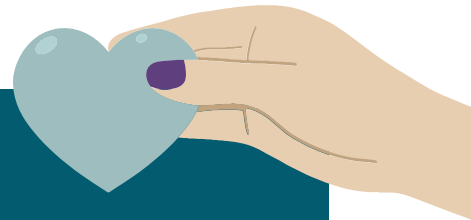
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Genentech Foundation
Levi Strauss Foundation
Michelson 20MM Foundation
Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative
RRF Foundation for Aging
Schmidt Family Foundation
Stupski Foundation
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