



January 26, 2007

Ms. Melissa Josephs
Women Employed
111 N. Wabash, Suite 1300
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Ms. Josephs,

As a small business owner, I would like to pledge my support for the proposed Family Leave Insurance Program (FLIP).

My business partner and I are the owners of a small catering firm in Chicago, with an annual gross of about four million dollars. Catering is difficult, seasonal work, and we recognize our employees as our most valuable asset. But the business does not yield large profit margins. So while we try and offer as many benefits as we can (employee outings, vacation, insurance, retirement accounts), we cannot distribute annual raises like a larger organization may offer. My partner and I are always seeking to offer new benefits to our staff in order to promote a higher standard of living and quality of life. I have approximately 105 full- and part-time employees who would qualify for this insurance program, and I consider the \$39 per year per employee price to be a cost-effective method of helping my team to balance their home and work lives.

As a working woman and mother, I would also like to pledge my support for FLIP.

Years ago, at the birth of my daughter, I was able, as the owner of my own business, to adapt my professional schedule to my daughter's needs. I am aware of how fortunate I was to have that flexibility in my work life, and I realize how few working men and woman have that freedom. In addition, I have recently faced the serious illness of a family member. While the medical community is highly qualified to provide medical advise and surgical expertise, the most important care is offered by family. No one can care for your loved ones like you can. And I support any initiative that allows my employees (and my neighbors) to provide that aid and relief.

The proposed Illinois Family Leave Insurance Program would be good for my employees and therefore good for my business. I urge the house to vote yes.

Warmest Regards,

Rita Gutekanst

Principal