



MESSAGING FOR CARE VOTERS

The Care Voter file is a project of FV@W Action and Family Forward Action with participation from Citizen Action NY, NJ Citizen Action, Poder Latinx, and Take Action Minnesota We Vote We Win and Maine Women's Lobby



The following messaging guidelines are suggested for building narrative, social media content, scripts, print, emails and other tools for the Care Voter File. Please add to these items and share your ideas with us!



General Messaging in Support of Care Policy: *for voters and non-voters of all political persuasions*

1 Lead With Values

We all have people we love that we would do anything for. We've made promises to those people, like being there for them when they need us most. To keep those promises, we need elected leaders who will pass paid family and sick leave, investments in child care, and other support for our families.

2 Explain the Problem

Yet every single Republican and a handful of moderate Democrats in Congress stood in the way of passing a universal child care program; comprehensive paid family and medical leave; child tax credits; climate change solutions; and so many other policies that would have allowed our families to thrive.

Those same politicians and their ultra rich donors are simultaneously trying to strip us of our power—with abortion bans, attacks on trans children, immigration restrictions, voter suppression, and more.

3 Define the Solution

We need elected leaders who care about care. Care work—from raising and teaching children to caring for our elderly and disabled community members—is essential to our economy and the livelihoods of our families. Without care work, no other work is possible.

We will not let **wealthy corporations** and corrupt politicians hoard wealth and power that belongs in our communities. This country depends on us and parents and caregivers, and from now on, we will only vote for and support candidates who care.

4 Describe the Benefits

When we center caregivers and parents, especially those who have been historically left out, we can build a society where all of us can thrive.

Child Care Messaging

- Like clean water, safe food, and good public schools, high quality, affordable child care is a national priority that benefits everyone. As a nation, we want to ensure that all children, families, and communities can thrive—and we have the ability to do that by coming together to invest in a bright future for all of us.
- When we all come together, we can accomplish big things. When America decides something is a common good, we find the funding. We can choose to provide quality child care and ensure all our families are able to thrive.
- Having a universal, high quality, childcare system is the key to an economy that works. Our nation loses \$57 billion each year in economic productivity and revenue losses due to lack of access to child care—roughly the estimated cost of funding and reforms to our current child care system. We must create a child care system that meets the needs of children, families, communities, and child care providers.
- Wealthy corporations hoard the resources we need for child care causing women and mothers—especially those who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latina, and Pacific Islander—to bear the brunt of the economic and health impacts of this crisis. Since the start of the pandemic, **over 2 million women and mothers have had to leave the workforce**, devastating our economy and families, many of these workers remain unemployed
- A child care crisis existed long before the pandemic started. Families across the country were already facing child care shortages and living in child care deserts. The pandemic has merely exposed the vulnerabilities we've created by not prioritizing our kids—and shown why we cannot go back to the way things were.
- We need to redefine child care as necessary for joyful children, thriving families, and a strong economy. We need to dramatically increase government investment in child care. Broad support exists for a universal public childcare system. We just need our elected officials to act.
- Every family deserves access to high quality, affordable, and culturally relevant child care, and every child care provider should be paid a wage that reflects the essential work they do. And it shouldn't fall on parents or providers to foot the bill for an inadequate system.
- Elected officials who prioritize childcare have proposed different ways to build the childcare system our families need. The proven program ideas have similar features:
 - Developed in ways that support parents' needs and considers their economic security and well-being, and is flexible enough regardless of income, employment, language, and other needs; especially for Black, brown, and Indigenous mothers, immigrant mothers, and low-income mothers.
 - Accessible to all families with children ages 0-13, including care for some families who need care for older children and young adults; with targeted focus on prioritizing the needs of Black, brown, and Indigenous children, families and providers.
 - Values the work of the child care workforce and ensures the equitable pay and benefits they deserve for their work.

Paid Family and Medical Leave Messaging

- At some point, we all will need time to care. We shouldn't have to decide between caring for our families and putting food on the table.
- The U.S is one of the only nations without a paid leave program. It's why we have suffered so badly during the pandemic. We are 5% of the world's population but suffered more than 35% of the world's COVID related deaths. Other nations had time to care.
- Lack of paid leave is why 25% of people who give birth return to work after only two weeks and why so many of our country's seniors died alone before and during COVID.
- A comprehensive paid leave program looks like every family in this country has the time they need to welcome a new baby, care for themselves, tend to a loved one, support themselves during a loved one's military deployment, or recover from domestic abuse.
- Our families deserve comprehensive paid family and medical leave as a basic standard for all in our country and the rules must be equitable for everyone—so that no one is denied paid time off when they need it the most.
- Women and caregivers have carried us through this pandemic, at home and on the front lines. Women have lost over 5 million jobs during the pandemic, and women of color have suffered the greatest losses. We can and must pass policies that protect working families, save jobs, and create new forms of economic growth.
- We know that The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leaves out 44 percent of the workforce. Workers who qualify for FMLA have only unpaid leave, which millions cannot afford to take. Workers earning less than \$15 an hour are least likely to be covered by FMLA, a reality that greatly impacts Latino, Asian, and Black people.
- If we're all to benefit, a paid family and medical leave program must be equitable and include the following provisions:
 - **Job protection** to ensure that a person's job is there for them when they are able to return to work.
 - **Coverage for all workers**, for all types of needs: medical, family and bonding.
 - **Affordable wage replacement** sufficient to the amount needed to encourage workers earning lower wages to take the time off that they need. Many states provide a progressive scale amounting to \$90-100% of pay for workers earning the lowest wages.
 - **An adequate number of weeks** to ensure that working people have the time they need to rest, recover, and provide care. Research suggests that a minimal number of 12-16 weeks is needed.

Paid Sick and Safe Days

- We have all needed a few days off to care for a child, nurse a cold, or take an older family member to the doctor. Paid sick and safe days permit us to be there without risking the loss of our jobs or paychecks.
- Safe days are needed for people to address the safety and security issues associated with domestic violence including health, housing, legal, finances and childcare.
- Nearly one quarter of adults in the U.S. have been fired or threatened with job loss for taking time off to recover from illness or care for a loved one, this makes it impossible to care for loved ones.
- A single parent with two children earning \$10 per hour and working full-time will slip below the federal poverty line if they miss even a single day of work in a month. Our families need paid sick and safe days.
- For people paid the minimum wage, missing 3.5 days of work is the equivalent to losing a month's groceries.
- Every family wants what's best for their children, but without paid sick days, parents are often forced to choose between their family's financial stability and their children's health. Too many have no choice but to send a child to school sick or skip medical care.
- Parents without paid sick days are twice as likely to send a sick child to school and are five times as likely to take a child or family member to an emergency room because of the inability to take time off during the work day.
- Paid sick days protect public health and will make our country a safer, healthier place to live. Nearly 80 percent of food service workers in the United States have no paid sick days.

Messaging Care with Democracy and Reproductive Justice Issues

1 Lead With Values

When moms and caregivers organize, we win.

2 Explain the Problem

That's why far-right extremists have been working for decades to strip power from us. They know that when we stand together, we are unstoppable.

The attacks we're seeing on our families—from abortion bans to voter suppression to hatred toward trans and LGBTQ+ kids to immigration restrictions—are backlash from the white, racist, super rich who are desperate to hold on to their power. We can't let up now.

3 Define the Solution

We cannot, and will not, let a small group of people hoard wealth and power in this country while our communities and families pay the price.

Moms and caregivers have had enough. Our elected leaders must invest in the essentials that we need to survive—bodily autonomy, voting rights, child care, paid leave, gun control, and climate solutions—or we will work to replace every single one of them.

4 Describe the Benefits

With the power of our votes and voices, we can build a society where all of us can thrive.

- Far-right extremists have been working for decades to strip power from moms, women, and families. They know that when we organize, we are unstoppable.
- The attacks we're seeing on our families—from abortion bans to voter suppression to hatred toward trans and LGBTQ+ kids to immigration restrictions—are backlash from the white, racist, super rich who are desperate to hold on to their power. We can't let up now.
- The ability to choose when and how to have a family is essential to racial, gender, and economic justice. Fifty-nine percent of people who have an abortion already have at least one child. Abortion restrictions are about controlling the power of moms, caregivers, and people who can become pregnant.
- The courts don't decide our fate. We do.
- We cannot, and will not, let a small group of people hoard wealth and power in this country while our communities and families pay the price.
- State and local elections matter now more than ever. We deserve elected officials and judges who trust people to decide what is the best decision for them. That is who we need to elect. With the midterm elections coming up in November, we must elect candidates who respect our bodily autonomy and freedom at every level of government. From school board to our next Governor—we must continue to elect leaders that will defend access to abortion and seek to expand it.

Messaging Care with Democracy and Reproductive Justice Issues (continued)

- People who can become pregnant, parents, and all caregivers have had enough. Our elected leaders must invest in the essentials that we need to survive—bodily autonomy, voting rights, child care, paid leave, gun control, and climate solutions—or we will work to replace every single one of them.
- Access to the ballot box, voting and ensuring that our vote counts are key factors of full participation in our society. Electing the candidates that will honor and protect the rights of all people, especially women, are critical at this moment.
- When SCOTUS overturned *Roe v. Wade*, dismantling more than 50 years of precedence, they ushered in more than 13 state bans on abortion, not one of these states has a paid leave law.
- Laws stipulating forced pregnancy will exist in states without a national paid leave or comprehensive, affordable childcare program resulting in greater social upheaval for children and families.
- As women and people who believe in freedom, we are voting for candidates who will run openly on the the right to privacy, the right to access reproductive healthcare including abortions and the entire care agenda. We will accept nothing less.

