



June 26, 2009

Dear Senate Staff Work Group,

Corporate Voices for Working Families, the leading national business membership organization representing the private sector on public and corporate policy issues involving working families, knows that good corporate and public policies improve the lives of working families and can have a positive impact on the business bottom line and on our nation's economic prosperity. For the past eight years, Corporate Voices has worked with the business community to set the standard and raise the bar of work-family policies. Our 50 partner companies (list attached) understand that flexible work arrangements, for both salaried and hourly employees, contribute to more productive work environments, increased employee loyalty, reduced stress, and as a result, increased profitability and global competitiveness.

Our partner companies have been in the forefront of providing paid time off, onsite child care centers and a range of workplace flexibility options that make a big difference for employees and their families. When companies provide options that help employees strike a balance between work and family, morale and productivity increases – and businesses benefit from less turnover and a more dedicated and productive workforce. **At the same time, businesses find that these policies are critical management tools that enhance recruitment, retention, engagement, cost control, productivity, and ultimately, financial performance.**

Last month First Lady Michelle Obama delivered the keynote address at our Annual Meeting, followed by a private meeting with our board member companies to discuss the importance of helping ALL families balance work/life and the need for the business community to take a lead role in helping to move this dialogue forward. As part of this event we released a new research report, *Innovative Workplace Flexibility Options for Hourly Workers*, which can be accessed on our website [www.cvworkingfamilies.org](http://www.cvworkingfamilies.org). **This is one of the first pieces of research that suggests that workplace flexibility works as well or better for hourly workers as it does for professional workers.** It builds off our earlier study, *Business Impacts of Flexibility*, which also indicates that workplace flexibility is a critical management tool to meet business goals. We now know that this is true for both salaried and hourly, exempt and non-exempt workers. Our research demonstrates that there is a strong business case for flexibility policies for all employees.

In her dialogue with the Corporate Voices' Board, Mrs. Obama asked the key question: If it is good for the business bottom line, why don't all companies have flexibility policies? Our Board members responded by explaining that many companies

lack information about the benefits of flexibility as well as examples of what works for both the employer and the employee. We believe it is critical to communicate the business imperative for workplace flexibility and share model business practices for effectively implementing broad-based flexibility.

Corporate Voices highlights real-life business best practices from companies that are constantly finding innovative and creative ways to address the needs of both their business and their employees. Our unique vantage point gives us the ability to develop recommendations that work for both employees who are juggling work and life responsibilities, but also for business and their stakeholders. We appreciate the opportunity to outline some of our priorities on work-life issues.

- **Communicate the bottom-line business case as to why workplace flexibility should be offered to both exempt and non-exempt employees.**

To ensure that workplace flexibility is seen as a management tool for all employers, Corporate Voices suggests there be a broad education campaign prior to policy mandates. In a communication campaign, we can articulate the business case for flexibility, share successful best practices, address why it is working, and outline the challenges, successes and issues faced by the employers and employees.

The business community can and should be challenged to encourage their peers to adopt workplace flexibility programs as an integral part of the way work is done and how people are managed, but to do this the employers need access to credible resources, examples and explanations as to why and how it affects the business bottom line. For this effort to succeed it must directly engage businesses (of all sizes and industry) and business groups, government agencies, academics and policy makers. Corporate Voices has already started on this with a new project with *Working Mother Magazine* to highlight the Best Companies for Hourly Workers – scheduled to be released in May 2010. Historically the “best of” lists have helped to drive new corporate policy, which in turn can help to influence public policy.

- **There is no “one-size-fits-all” flexibility solution — flexibility “fit” is important.**

Creating a supportive culture and offering a variety of options enables a better flexibility “fit” to suit the unique characteristics of employees and the requirements of the jobs. Use of certain types of arrangements, the number of flexibility options, and ease of access to occasional flexibility and time off all increase flexibility “fit,” and having flexibility “fit” is strongly related to employee engagement, well-being and retention. Our research shows that the corporate culture has to be able to support flexibility in order for the arrangement to work. It is important to remember that every job, company, employer, manager and employee is unique; therefore, a flexibility policy has to account for this.

Corporate Voices encourages the development of tools and training resources that will help employers develop policies that have flexibility “fit” with their workforce and

their workplace. The resources should highlight the different job requirements and characteristics, as well as the range of needs of employees and employers.

- **Corporate Voices and our partner companies are committed to an ongoing dialogue about public and corporate policy issues that affect working families throughout their lives.**

Corporate Voices' partner companies have a long history of creating corporate policies that are good for their employees and their families. At the same time, Corporate Voices acts as a bridge between the business community and policymakers. This is a critical link, as work-life issues have private and public components. We believe policymakers should practice good workplace flexibility practices and serve as a model for the private sector. For that reason, Corporate Voices, along with Working Mother Magazine, created the *Best of Congress Award*. In 2008, we gave awards to 24 Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle to recognize them for not only their advocacy work for working families and voting record on key legislative issues, but also their own office's work-life policies. We are thrilled that one of our recipients, Senator Kohl, is helping to lead this effort. Corporate Voices will award Members of Congress in September 2010 and every two years thereafter.

The challenge for the business community is clear – working families are the heart of our nation's economic prosperity and competitiveness. Our partner companies are committed to working with you to enhance the quality of work and life for all employees while increasing the profitability of American business and strengthening our nation's economic prosperity.

Corporate Voices is leading the business community in this important dialogue. Our focus remains on ensuring that our working families have the skills and supports necessary to successfully navigate the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. We welcome the opportunity to participate in your effort to secure common-ground solutions and develop bipartisan recommendations that work for both employers and the employees.

Sincerely,



Donna Klein  
Executive Chair  
Corporate Voices for Working Families