

CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS

THE THREE FACES OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

INTRODUCTION/MODERATOR:

**HEATHER BOUSHEY,
SENIOR ECONOMIST,
CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS**

SPEAKERS:

**ARLENE HOLT BAKER,
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
AFL-CIO**

**JUDITH WARNER,
AUTHOR,**

“PERFECT MADNESS: MOTHERHOOD IN THE AGE OF ANXIETY”

**REVEREND JENNIFER BUTLER,
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
FAITH IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**JOAN WILLIAMS,
LAW PROFESSOR,
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, HASTINGS COLLEGE OF THE LAW**

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HEATHER BOUSHEY: So welcome, and thank you all for coming today, to our event to discuss a recent report that Joan Williams and I released called, “The Three Faces of Work-Family Conflict.” And my name is Heather Boushey. I’m the senior economist here at CAP. It is just wonderful to see so many faces here in the audience. It’s super exciting; we’re very excited about this.

I want to kick off our discussion today by sharing with you some key facts about our economy, and then we’ll go into, sort of, the remainder of our program. And I want to start with one key fact that we’ve been talking about a lot, here, but I just want to underscore, which is the fact that women are now half of all workers on U.S. payrolls. And as a result of this, families no longer look like that traditional – quote, unquote, “traditional” – family – that is, the stay-at-home mom and the breadwinner dad.

Now of course, this was never the majority of U.S. families. Only a little under half of all families looked like that back in the 1970s. But today, that only describes one in five U.S. families – looks like this traditional U.S. family type. Another one in five families are headed by an unmarried parent, most likely a single mom, who is working. So the third fact I want to share with you is that you put these two things together, and what we have is that mothers are now the breadwinners in many American families.

Across about four in 10 American families, the mother is the primary breadwinner, bringing home at least half of the family’s earnings. And in another quarter of families, she’s a co-breadwinner, bringing home at least a quarter of the family’s total earnings. Yet, as my colleague, Joan Williams, “likes” – air quotes for those of you listening on tape – “likes” to say, the United States has the most family-hostile public policy in the developed world.

So even though our families have changed, the institutions around them haven’t. And this lack of progress on a pro-family labor and social policy agenda has been due to what we think is a political impasse. And that’s why we wanted to do this event today and bring together this fabulous panel to talk about how to move through this. One of the key challenges is that work-family conflict plays out different across families, but often, sort of in the press or in our conversations about policy, we tend to only look at a small spectrum of families.

The work that Joan and I did found that the professional class, the poor and the broad middle class each face different challenges around work-family conflict. For professionals, the families often overwork, and while they have more access, usually, to workplace flexibility and good benefits, these families still have to cope with extremely long hours, typically.

For low-income families, the challenge is often single parenthood alongside schedules that often change with little notice and a lack of access to basic benefits, like paid sick days, that offer job protection. But of course, most families are in the middle. And this is a group that is too often overlooked in our media discussions and in our policy discussions.

These families typically have both parents at work, but they do so without the higher incomes of the professional families and the workplace flexibility. They do so, typically, in workplaces that don't offer them what they need to address their work-family challenges. And often, they struggle to afford decent childcare and care for their elderly or sick family members. And they need flexible workplace policies.

Yet, effective political action to reform our workplace rules has been stymied by this great divide across class between the poor, the professionals and the great middle. We think, however, that we can construct an effective, cross-class politics around these issues. Recent polling that we put together based on work we did with the Rockefeller Foundation and Time, Inc., shows that these work-life policies are incredibly popular across income, across political ideology and across religious affiliation.

In the poll, we found that three-quarters of respondents agreed with the statement, "Employers should be required to give workers more flexibility in their work schedules." This includes 80 percent of moderates and 71 percent of Evangelicals agreed with that statement. We found that three-quarters – 77 percent of respondents – agree that, quote, "businesses should be required to provide paid family medical leave for every worker that needs it," including 74 percent of evangelicals and 81 percent of moderates.

And we found that 66 percent of evangelicals and 75 percent of moderates and 68 percent of respondents overall agreed with the statement that, quote, "the government or businesses" – it was a split sample – "should provide more funding for childcare to support parents who work." So we found very broad support across a large swath of respondents for these kinds of workplace policies that would help, if we implemented them, make the U.S. not the most family-hostile country in the developed world.

Yet, we haven't made enough progress on these issues. In a report that we laid out in the lobby, as well, with the other one, called "Our Working Nation," we laid out our agenda on these issues. And we focus in on four key areas where we believe that we need to make the most important changes. The first is that we need to update our labor standards to account for the fact that most workers also have family responsibilities. That worker with family responsibilities is not the aberration; they are the norm.

And we need to do that in three ways. We need to institute predictable and flexible workplace schedules. We need to ensure that workers have access to paid, job-protected family medical leave, and we need to ensure that workers have the right to paid and job-protected sick days. Second, we need to improve basic fairness in our workdays by ending discrimination against all workers, including pregnant women and including caregivers.

Third, we need to provide direct support to working families with childcare and elder-care needs, especially in these tough economic times. And we're seeing so many states cutting back on funding for these programs that so often make the difference between somebody being able to stay in the labor force and not.

And then finally, we need to ensure that we improve our knowledge around these issues by collecting national data around work-life policies offered by employers and analyzing the effectiveness of the policies that we do have. In each of these policy areas, we think that there are ways to move towards a politics that addresses the very real challenges faced by the vast majority of U.S. families.

And there could not be a better time to address these issues. Polls keep showing – and we keep reading this, I feel like, every time I pick up the newspaper – that the public is concerned about jobs. They're concerned about the economy. They're concerned about jobs, economy, jobs, economy. You keep hearing this over and over again. Now, I'm an economist and I understand that the issues around creating jobs are, of course, paramount. Right, for that one in 10 workers in America today who is out of work and searching for a job, this is an incredibly pressing issue.

But it's also a pressing issue for the nine in 10 workers who have a job right now and are worried about being able to keep it. They're worried – they have stress and anxiety about the quality of that job and whether or not, if they have a sick child or an ailing parent or they need a little bit of flexibility, that's going to put them on a path to losing that job. And we know that once they lose it and they're out of the labor – and they're out of the job, at this point in time, half of all workers are taking at least six months to find a new job.

So one of the most important public policies we can do right now to ease economic anxiety is to implement the kinds of policies that help people keep their jobs, not just alongside job creation. We're going to talk about a lot of things here today, but the goal of what we want to talk about is how we think that there's a compelling politics here. We think that there's a compelling politics around ensuring that every worker gets a fair day's pay so that their families do not suffer just because it's a woman who is now working, because men have lost more jobs in the recession than women have.

We think that there's a compelling politics where we can bring people together around ensuring that families don't have to worry that a sick child or an ailing, elderly parent does not force them into an impossible choice between their job or caring for a loved one. So with that, I want to get our conversation started. And we're going to begin with a set of comments from Arlene Holt Baker, who's the executive vice president of the AFL-CIO.

She grew up in Texas and got her start in union organizing with AFSCME – the American Federation of State, County and Municipal employees. Anybody an AFSCME member out there? No, not today. Okay, I thought I would try. Now, in 1999, Arlene became the first director of the AFL's Voice at Work campaign, where she launched a dynamic movement to engage elected officials, clergy members, community leaders and others in support of workers' freedom to form unions.

Arlene has been a powerful voice in the labor movement and continues to advocate each and every day for the rights of workers, including the right to organize, health-care reform, fair trade, immigration rights, LGBT rights, voting rights and the right for all union members to be

able to fully participate in democratic unions. We are so pleased to have her joining us today, so please help me welcome her. (Applause.)

ARLENE HOLT BAKER: Thank you so very much, Heather, and I want to thank the Center for American Progress for bringing together this most important and timely dialogue. It is so timely, because America's families are in pain right now. They're suffering with job loss, insecurity, stagnant or sinking wages and a shrunken workforce that puts more strain on everybody. The everyday rigors of paying the mortgage, the health bills and the food and utility bills have become overwhelming for far too many.

In the middle of today's economic disaster, this jobs crisis, what is the most important thing working people grapple with? Taking care of their families, feeding and clothing their children; making sure the elderly mother is safe and cared for; keeping a roof overhead; and sustaining the nurturing relationships that sustain parents and children, even in our times. Although workers' productivity is soaring, our ability to take care of the fundamentals of our family lives is fraying and the economic hardships hard-working families deal with are complicated by this fact.

The realities of our workplaces have not changed to meet the new realities of our economy and our society. Ozzie and Harriet and Ward and June Cleaver are gone. For many families, this never was their reality. I know it certainly wasn't mine. But Ozzie, Harriet, June and Ward – they are gone and they are not coming back. But our workplaces are still set up as though Ozzie and Ward were the only ones going to work and Harriet and June were home with the kids.

Our families are trying to live in two different worlds at the same time, and it is just not working. Most people – men and women across race and class – agree that the changing status of women is a good thing, now that we are half the workforce and have the opportunity and the weight of being breadwinners. But we also agree that something has got to give. As the excellent CAP study on work and family conflict just verified, the conflict is no longer between men and women. It's between families and the systems that are not meeting our needs.

I can break this into three issues. One, we need public policies that support today's working families. Two, we need employers to change with the times. And three, we need the power to influence both public policy and our workplaces. And that means more working people must be able to form and join unions and bargain for what we need on the job, and advocate for what we need from elected officials.

On the public policy front, first, we must acknowledge that, while every sort of family struggles to juggle work and family responsibilities, low-wage workers, especially women, are the hardest hit. Low-wage jobs generally provide the fewest benefits and the least flexibility. So the public policy solutions we propose must specifically address the needs of low-wage workers. Two issues cry for urgent legislative attention: The need for equal pay and the need for paid sick leave and family leave.

Fifty-seven percent of blue-collar women and 44 percent of professional women said, in CAP's recent survey, they are their family's primary breadwinners. But women still average only 78 cents for every dollar a man earns. That's unconscionable, it's un-American and it's devastating. And we can address it by passing the Paycheck Fairness Act to update the 1963 Equal Pay Act. Nearly half of private-sector workers and 79 percent of low-income workers, most of whom are women, cannot take even one day off of work when they are sick without losing pay. No wonder three-quarters of Americans are stressed.

This past winter, we were all told to stay at home – you remember that – because of the H1N1 epidemic. How many people could really stay at home if they had caught the H1N1? And how do you choose between staying home to take care of your sick child and losing a day's pay? The Healthy Families Act would require most employers to provide full-time workers seven days of paid leave a year if they were sick or had a sick family member, with prorated benefits for part-timers.

Both of these measures are critical to meeting the basic realities of today's working families, and so are new levels of workplace flexibility. Flexible shifts, compressed workweeks, the ability to work part-time with benefits, leave to allow parents to attend school functions and telecommuting options can make the daily conflicts of working families more manageable, and we must pursue them.

But as we do, we have to make sure we're not falling into a trap laid by employers. Because when workers say flexibility, employers often here lower payroll cost, they hear no overtime pay; they hear no benefits; and they hear part-time. Flexibility is meaningless without a good job, decent wages and benefits. Public policy has to protect workers' pay, job security and basic workplace rights while expanding flexibility.

And this brings me to the role of employers. It's time for them to recognize that the costs of doing the wrong thing really do outweigh the costs of doing the right thing. The cost of not providing paid sick leave is an unhealthy, unhappy workplace. The cost of not enabling working people to meet their family responsibilities is high and expensive turnover. Many employers are doing the right thing, as the president's Council of Economic Advisors just reported.

But the same report waved another red flag. Flexibility is not an equal opportunity. Men, white workers and white-collar workers have most of the opportunity. Management, business and financial employees are twice as likely as service workers to have flexibility. Professionals are more than twice as likely as production workers to benefit from flexible hours.

And here is where workers' freedom to form and join unions and bargain comes into the picture. When workers can bargain, they can change their working conditions, and do it equitably across the workforce. At the bargaining table, workers and unions have won assistance getting and paying for childcare. We've won elder-care funds, paid time off and donated time to care for elderly relatives.

We've won paid parental leave and leave for victims of domestic violence. We've won shorter workdays with longer days, job-sharing arrangements, benefits for part-timers and shift-

swapping arrangements. This is what working people can do with the power of a union, especially when public policy and social pressure on employers back them up.

Now, I'm not going to stop – I'm going on and on, so I'm going to stop this brief overview now so that we can get to the panel discussion. But let me again thank the Center for American Progress and Heather for spotlighting the most basic issue for millions of working families: How do we take care of our families? Thank you. (Applause.)

(Audio break.)

MS. BOUSHEY: Okay, so I'm going to just take a second here to introduce our fantastic panel up here. I'm going to start at the end with my colleague and co-author, Joan Williams – Joan C. Williams. Joan is a distinguished professor of law and founding director of the Center for Worklife Law at the University of California-Hastings, College of the Law.

She is a prizewinning author and an expert on work-family issues and is, of course, the co-author of the report. Her book, "Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do About It," won the 2000 Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award. It's a favorite book of mine, and it's just been a delight to be able to work with her. So thank you.

Next, I'll go to Judith Warner, who is a bestselling author and frequent contributor to The New York Times op-ed page and the New York Times Magazine. She is, of course, best known for her 2005 New York Times bestseller, "Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety," and her New York Times column, "Domestic Disturbances." She has a new book out called "We've Got Issues: Children and Parents in the Age of Medication." We're so glad to have you join us today. Thank you.

And then finally, we have the Reverend Jennifer Butler, who is the executive director from Faith in Public Life. She founded Faith in Public Life to bridge religion and politics and to bring faith leaders to the public debates. She provides needed resources for faith leaders and the movement they represent to amplify their impact on the public debates. We are so happy that you could join us today, so thank you, Jen.

So I love being the moderator because I get to ask all the questions until you all get to chip in, but that's not for a while. So I want to start with a question just for the panelists and I'll let Joan sort of chime in at the end of this.

But to start with you all, one of the things that Joan and I talked a lot about in the "Three Faces" report is the need to target policies towards what we call the missing middle, which is actually a term we took from Theda Skocpol's book looking at the middle class.

And one of the implications of this is that we think that we would need to be thinking about more universal policies for families; not just aimed at the poor and not just workplace benefits for those at the top, but policies that affect the middle.

And of course, one of the most common rebuttals you hear to that line of argument is that the market can work its invisible hand and we don't really need to help those people; they don't actually need these kinds of public policies.

So do you think that there is a compelling politics around focusing on the middle? Sort of focusing on a broader, more universal strategy?

REVEREND JENNIFER BUTLER: I absolutely think there is. One of the things that struck me most about this report are the similarities that every group shares. You have to issue a caveat, of course, when saying that because some people have more privilege and have an easier time than others, but at the same time, the frustrations and the agonies and the difficulties are there.

And I think in today's economy, too, so many of the people, whether you're in the professional group or the middle or just sort of one paycheck away or one crisis away from winding up in that other segment, speaking as one who has a family that sort of straddles almost every one of those groups, it feels like. (Chuckles.) So I think what's compelling about it is there's a potential alliance that could develop. And that people, even though they may have a different sort of social standing or economic standing, they can share the same frustrations and agonies.

JUDITH WARNER: Liz, bold and brave of you to put that emphasis on the middle because I think there has been almost a kind of taboo against doing that in these discussions for a long time, partly because people in the middle aren't supposed to need, quote, unquote, "handouts," and partly because the feeling was, then, you must be about to neglect the poor since the needs are that much greater and that much more dramatic, and if we have sort of a limited amount of resources, how can we even justifiably talk about giving resources to the middle?

But I think the issue here is, first of all, that everyone does need help; that the need for help is way more widespread than we like to admit. And secondly, that you have to have a kind of social buy-in from everyone to get these kinds of policies off the ground.

My own model for thinking about this was my experience of living in France, which is what inspired the book, "Perfect Madness," and where you do have social supports for all families. You have sliding scales of supports, let's say; you have things that phase out after a certain point. But you do have a buy-in from everyone. You have everyone paying in, and then you have everyone receiving some form of benefit. And in this country, the programs that we do see the most widespread and enduring support for are the ones that are on this model – Social Security and Medicare.

MS. BOUSHEY: Do you have any comment on that?

MS. HOLT BAKER: Well, I absolutely do, although we are so focused right now – we talk about the middle and I, too, think you're looking across a spectrum – but you think about the middle, you think about the 15 million people who are unemployed today. The majority of those come from the middle class.

But the labor movement, what we're saying is that we've got to put people back to work again but these have got to be good jobs – good, decent jobs – not only with pay but with benefits. And our members and our future members, when we talk to them, the kind of policies that we're talking about in terms of flexibilities and policies that support working families is so very important to them. So I think the time for us to have this discussion is very timely right now because people need to go back to work but they're looking for good jobs, decent jobs, but jobs that help them also manage and work with raising their families.

MS. BOUSHEY: I couldn't agree more. Joan, I'd like to sort of flip it over to you to comment on that if you would like.

JOAN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I'd like to pick up on what Judy said, that, in many ways, progressives have been focused on the needs of the poor. And one of the reasons is because the poor have such crying needs and it's so difficult to get anything in the way of social benefits that it's natural to say that the most vulnerable is the place that we should focus our attention.

But I heard a phrase that's really stuck with me, which is that a program for the poor is a poor program. And it's tragic but I actually – I think I have come to the same conclusions as Judy; that unfortunately, it's true. To get social buy-in, I do think, although it seems so difficult, it's so important to make these programs universal.

Otherwise, because of threshold and because of various inevitable policy-design features, you have these folks who consider themselves middle class – often we think of them as working class – looking and they are doing the laundry at 11:00 p.m. and then rushing out to take their two children to different childcares and the third to work. And they look at low-income moms and they say, why is she getting help and I'm getting none?

And there are a lot of good answers to that question but, in some ways, I'm focused less on the good answers than I am on the politics that it creates and the class conflict that it creates that feeds right into the Republican agenda.

MS. BOUSHEY: Well, and, so tapping into that last statement that you said, Joan, do you all see in your various venues – Judy, being the media; the faith-based; and union members or middle-class families, working-class families. Do you see that tension that Joan described in terms of the politics? So I mean, I think that this question about how you target the middle and if you do it through universal policies, you're sort of upping the ante on the policy ask. These are big programs, they cost a lot more money, it's a big political lift, but do you see there's – do the folks that you talk to or listen to – are they crying out for that or are they – do you think it's a way through the political impasse, as Joan described it?

MS. HOLT BAKER: You know, I think the way that I'd like to say it, that at every one of those kitchen tables, whether it's the professionals or the working poor or the middle class, they're having a very similar conversation. They have very similar narratives. And we just have to find a way for them to share those narratives.

We certainly do represent working people who are in unions, but beyond that, we talk to members – potential members, as I said. We have our Working America, which is our associate membership program where they go and knock on doors and they talk to people about what issues are most important to them. And this is one of the things that comes up when people talk about, yes, talk about jobs, but the ability to provide quality child care, the ability to have the flexibility if one has a job to be able to take off and take a child to get medical care or stay at home with a sick child. And then when it comes to the working poor, just the ability to have a paid sick day because, as we know, they don't even have a paid sick day.

So I was almost going to say, these conversations are happening at a number of the tables. It's just how do we bring them together so they can share these narratives?

MS. BOUSHEY: Yeah. Did you – ?

REV. WILLIAMS: Yeah, well, in terms of faith communities, it depends on what section, of course, of the faith community you're talking about. At Faith in Public Life, we work with a broad range of groups that are working on issues of justice, compassion and the common good. And those can include folks who are centrist, even conservative, evangelicals and Catholics, and more progressive evangelicals and Catholics to mainliners to Jews to Muslims. So we're working with all of those groups.

And interestingly enough, where we get the most pushback in terms of this sort of framing is more among the social justice-leaning faith groups, the ones that Glenn Beck really loves to demonize these days, the so-called socialist types, which would be many, many of us.

But basically, there's a concern that if we move to this different kind of frame that we will overlook the needs of the poor. And so I think it's important to say that while we broaden the conversation, the broadening of the conversation is more to point out that we're all in this together and that we need to work for the common good and that there aren't so many differences among these three groups that are described.

Because it could very easily be any one of us that was in one of these social groupings especially, again, in today's economy. And so I think it's a matter of pointing out that we're trying to point out that we're all in this together.

In terms of the more conservative groups, like conservative evangelicals, say, which the study points out have some interesting level of support in these kinds of matters, I think this kind of framing helps them because it helps them, I think, wrestle with their fear around government programs that are going to help these other folks.

And while we need to surmount the stereotypes they have, maybe, towards the working poor – definitely need to keep working on this – this could be a way into the narrative so that you can help explain what families are really going through and that everybody is working hard but nobody is making it.

MS. BOUSHEY: That's great. Do you want to comment on that?

MS. WARNER: Just in terms of the media, I think that the media always has an obsession with the upper-middle class. And so we had for a long time the opting-out stories which began with the new traditionalists in the late '90s and then kind of reached the peak of frenzy and all the coverage that followed Lisa Belkin's opt-out revolution cover story, which – now I always have to say in her defense – was meant to be very narrowly focused and wasn't intended to be turned into enormous description of a big social trend, and took on a life that went on for years afterwards and kind of framed the way we thought about a lot of these issues. And I think that's one set of problems.

And part of it is, too, with focusing on the upper-middle class, there's a desire to find the sexy story, which will be a negative story, which I really think comes down to the fact that journalists are looking at their former schoolmates who are now much wealthier than they are – (laughter) – and are kind of looking for ways to be finding problems with what's going on in the higher reaches of the upper-middle class.

And then there are the stories that focus on the poor. I was actually amazed – the lead story of the Times yesterday was about how states are cutting back on the programs to give support to mothers who have transitioned off welfare, who have been working and who were support to get child-care support along the way, and have been cutting back on it.

This has been a story in the making for years now. It didn't just arise recently – so very recently. But you don't get a lot of attention to the middle and I think that the story of the middle is just not sexy. There isn't necessarily conflict there. There isn't sort of a hook that makes it interesting in quite the same way.

MS. BOUSHEY: I have to agree with you. I often find that when I'm thinking about the middle and why it's not sexy, it seems like what would be really interesting is if all the moms would go back on, then we'd sort of solve all our problems. But barring that, we have to actually talk about policy, which isn't very sexy. It's just sort of nuts and bolts.

MS. WARNER: And policy doesn't get coverage. When politicians are talking about these issues and are trying to do something, there's a kind of resounding silence that surrounds it. And this is true even in presidential campaigns. Now, in more recent years, when we've actually seen these issues come to the fore, there's a real mutedness, I think, in the coverage.

MS. BOUSHEY: And it's interesting if we think that this would actually be something people care about and we've got polls – the numbers that we said before and I know that were up on the screens – that these are compelling policy issues; it is interesting that they don't get a lot of coverage because it seems like there is something – there is a chunk there that's very interesting to people but somehow the media doesn't see it as interesting.

MS. HOLT BAKER: Well, Heather, do you think a part of that could be that they've set it up to be "women's issues?" And it's not just women's issues. We find now in your polling, and certainly anecdotally when we go out and we're talking to men, these are issues that they're

very concerned about, too. I kind of jokingly say that especially this younger generation of working men and young men because they've been raised by these working moms. (Chuckles.)

So I'm saying that may be an opportunity for us to tell this story more. But not just us telling it and just not the mom, but the mom, the dad, the men, also, because men are finding that they also are having the issue of elder care and child care and it falls – the majority of it – on the woman, but more and more men are having to deal with this issue, too.

MS. BOUSHEY: Joan?

MS. WILLIAMS: And in fact, as the report mentions, men now report more work-family conflict than women do. And that's really a revolution. And I think one of the reasons that happens is because of these professional managerial men who are working these extremely long schedules.

But also very importantly because of the tag-team men in the missing middle who – much of the discussion of the missing middle in the report because there are so few studies of the middle-income people was based on union arbitrations from a database that the Center for WorkLife Law keeps.

And these union arbitrations tell really amazing stories – for example, men fired when they refused – this is from the Amalgamated Transit Union – men fired when they refused to stay for drug tests. They had no problem having a drug test but they couldn't stay after the shift, which was when the drug tests were given, because they needed to get home to relieve their wives who had to get to work.

And so when you think about the fact that men now have such high levels of work-family conflict, we immediately tend to think of the professionals. But a lot of these men are tag-team dads in the missing middle.

MS. BOUSHEY: And so I'll just point out the obvious: There are no men up here on our panel today. (Laughter.) Do you think that is hurting our efforts here to reach out to men? I feel like it's hard to bring them in on these issues. Any thoughts on that? I know, Joan, you've been working on a book on this topic.

MS. WILLIAMS: I was going to say, I'm committed to the issue but a sex change is not in my – (inaudible, laughter). I've just completed a book called "Reshaping the Work-Family Debate: Why Men and Class Matter." I do think until we begin to talk about the gender pressures on men that lead such work-centered lives and, now, to feel so incredibly torn about work-family conflict that we're really not going to make a lot of progress on these issues.

MS. HOLT BAKER: And I would certainly agree with you there, Joan, because this recession that we're in, more men ended up losing their jobs as a result of it and of the women being the breadwinner. So those kinds of pressures, I think, are an opportunity – I guess I have to look at a half-full glass now – for us to bring and get more men engaged in this conversation because I think they are, quite frankly, ready to have it.

MS. BOUSHEY: Well, I hope so. I want to come back to a question for Jen, here, for a moment. I was really startled when I ran the numbers for the poll memo that is out there on the table if folks want to see it, where we saw that there was such high appeal among evangelicals for these work-family-balance policies.

And I haven't sort of played in that space before, so for me, it was like, wow. It was this sort of "a-ha" moment. I was like, this is so fascinating but I just don't get it. I mean, I get why these policies would appeal to folks across the spectrum but what I don't get is why we don't hear them talking about it more.

To my mind, these are family-values issues; these are how somebody can get time off work to care for their kid. These are like the bread-and-butter of what we think – they're very American; they're about family; they're about our core values. Why have we not heard as much from the evangelical community about these issues? Or are we hearing it? Is it out there and we're just not hearing it here in Washington?

REV. BUTLER: Yeah, I think it's more the latter. I think that these – I was not surprised, actually, to see those high numbers of support. And when you talk about family values, yes, absolutely, these should be at the core of what a family-values agenda is all about.

I think there's a tendency, at least among progressives, to sort of think of evangelicals as the Family Research Council. (Chuckles.) And they are not the Family Research Council. There are a number of groups I think that have organized evangelicals around them and have defined family values as these conservative social issues.

And that's something that progressives, I think, can work to challenge because these numbers clearly show that evangelicals are more interested in a broader family agenda. They're experiencing the same things. I mean, white evangelicals are a quarter of the population. So they're experiencing the same things that we're reading about in these reports. And the very fact that it resonates so deeply with the concept of family and with that sort of cultural conversation I think is an actual opportunity to reach and influence them.

MS. BOUSHEY: And so can you – that's great to hear. How can we reach them? Do you have any – I mean I know we try to write reports but there are other ways of reaching people. Do you have any sort of recommendations?

REV. BUTLER: Well, there are a number of leaders who have actually been – among evangelicals – who've been writing about these family issues for years and wanting to shift family policies – the same ones that are spoken of in this report – people like Ron Cider and Jim Wallis and David Gushee and a woman named Elizabeth (sic) Groothuis, who has written a sort of feminist-evangelical-theology book.

So there are a number of leaders out there that are eager to do this but they haven't been tapped. And meanwhile, there's been a lot of funding that's gone into groups like Family

Research Council to organize evangelicals in the opposite direction. So I think we need to counter that. To be real, there will be some tensions.

I mentioned white evangelicals and it's just important to say that the numbers in this report included black and white evangelicals. And if we were to take out black evangelicals who, because of history, understand very well the importance of government policies and economic justice and discrimination, they tend to have a sort of different view of the government and the role of government in society. So that would up these numbers, and so you see 70 percent support. If we just looked at white evangelicals, that might be lower, but these numbers are so high that it leads me to really want to sort of look at the numbers on white evangelicals and really analyze that.

So you'll see conflict around the role of government but I think that can be surmountable if we really speak strongly of the need to keep families together and the kinds of things that are tugging at people's heartstrings as you read the stories that are in this report.

I think sometimes progressives are a little afraid to talk about family values in the same way that in recent years, we've just been a little afraid to talk about values and religion in general. And we need to just be bold in speaking about the importance of family and the important of parents and fathers and mothers staying at home and being able to spend more time with their children. So I think some of it is a sort of "messaging" thing and being willing to really reach in there.

The other thing we'll see some differences over is just the role of women, obviously, in society. But what we're also seeing there and what we've seen at Faith in Public Life in terms of our own polling is both on the role of government and the role of gender, the roles of men and women and families. Those have been shifting in recent years among the younger generation of evangelicals.

So I think this report is well-timed in the sense that you have a newer generation coming along of evangelicals that's very interested in issues like climate change, immigration reform, ending torture. They're not their parents. (Chuckles.) They're very, very different. And they are rebelling against what they see as a very narrow version of Christianity that's been playing out in American politics. And they're going to provide a different kind of leadership when it comes to government and when it comes to gender roles.

MS. BOUSHEY: Ah, interesting. Anyone have a comment on that?

MS. WILLIAMS: I did have a comment. I think that the discussion about family in the United States has very much focused on ideals; with progressive saying the ideals should be a variety of family forms, which I totally agree with. On the other hand, in terms of building a political coalition, that's not the place for us to focus our discussion. The discussion should be focused on the day to day because on the day to day, we all have these family values.

Caregiving as a family value is not a partisan issue and so I do think the progressives have fallen into the pitfall of focusing on it, keeping the discussion about family at the level of

ideals, which can only fuel the conservative cause rather than focusing the decision on what families are struggling with day to day to care for the people they love. This is a family value that I think all of us can relate to.

MS. WARNER: I think there's a very simple reframing, too, which – this sounds very sappy to say, but shifting the framing to children and away from women, which is sort of also kind of painful to say, as a feminist, but I think it would be a lot more effective and equally true. And there are so many stories that have been negative.

If you look at day care, for example, we've had countless stories on the dangers of day care. There were studies out recently on the positive effects of day care. There were studies that were done looking at long-term negative effects and then looking at long-term positive effects. Nobody talks about the long-term positive effects.

No one talks about, really, the negative or positive effects on children of the family pressures that are happening right now; on the kinds of stresses that families are undergoing because of, right now, of course, the economy – we're talking about that a bit – but longer term because of the sort of frantic way that families live.

But there is actually research on this. There is writing on it. There is an argument to be made that the unsupported way families have to live has a really deleterious effect on children and should be changed, among other reasons, but for that reason as well.

MS. BOUSHEY: That's a great point. I like that. I wanted to move next – I wanted to tap into something Jen said about the role of government. And I wanted to lob this question to you first, Judy, but then of course everybody feel free to chime in.

One of the things that I think we, as progressives, struggle with is that we're always asking the government to take responsibility for these kinds of things. And in our report, Joan and I put the onus on employers and policymakers to sort of shift the responsibility from individuals onto sort of a more collective way of dealing with this.

Do you think – I mean, I hesitate to ask you if you think that's the right path because I'm going to guess I know what your answer is on that. But I want to ask you about the political challenge. How can we talk about shifting the responsibility to someone other than individuals?

And we've talked a lot about how these are problems that not just one family faces but that lots of families face, and so understanding that you're not in isolation can be an important way through that. But what kind of political strategy can we forge to shift the onus of the responsibility away from individuals?

MS. WARNER: This was really the central theme of "Perfect Madness," the individualism that lays at the heart of this problem: that women have so completely internalized the idea that they are responsible for everything having to do with their families, and their children in particular, that it almost – the conversation, at least when I was reporting this book, was almost impossible to have around the idea of how government might play a role because you

would immediately get back from people I was interviewing, this – well, do you want the government raising your children? Which is, of course, not at all what it's about. But this notion that everything was resting just on their shoulders went so deep.

Our society has turned in such an individualistic and anti-government direction for so many decades now, that for a lot of people, it's all that they've really ever known. And I think that, that really needs profoundly to change. And it "is" changing in people's attitudes.

Over the past few years, we've seen polls over time saying that people are interesting in seeing the government take a larger role in all kinds of different areas. So it seems to be happening even if that kind of very individualistic rhetoric isn't coming under question the way it needs to be ultimately.

MS. BOUSHEY: Would you have comments on this, Jen?

REV. BUTLER: Yeah, I think if we talk about it in terms of the responsibility of individuals or the responsibility of government or the responsibility of business, the responsibility of everyone in our community to make sure that families can make it and that things aren't stacked against families and we continue to tell the kind of stories that you've told in this report, I think we can break through.

It never ceases to amaze me how this government frame of being, like, scary, big, bad government is so hypocritical, right, because conservatives will advocate for the kind of repressive laws that we're seeing implemented in Arizona right now where the government is playing a major, intrusive role into people's individual lives, able to pull them over at random.

Sometimes I get overwhelmed with trying to take that narrative back but at the same time, conservatives don't even believe in that narrative, so I think we just need to continue to systematically challenge it. And that maybe even working from this concept of the family, the family at its very base is sort of a building block of society, right, it's the first experience of community that most folks have.

And so if you begin to speak even of government as we're all in this together, we're all a family, we all need to work for the common good and this is what's best for our families – for mothers and fathers and for children – then I think we can take that frame back.

MS. BOUSHEY: Yeah, go ahead.

HOLT BUTLER: Yeah, just a comment. Jen, I couldn't agree with you more because, to me, I started thinking when you were talking, it really does take this village. And in terms of the responsibility that employers have, well, we've been able to bargain – the union movement. If it had not been for the trade union movement, we would not have the eight-hour day, the weekends. We wouldn't have negotiated sick leave or pensions.

So there's the employer, but the government also has a responsibility here. A government is a safety net, so you've got to talk about it in the sense that it's uniquely American

and in the sense of individual responsibility, employer responsibility. And yes, the government has a responsibility here, too, and we should not shy away from that.

MS. WILLIAMS: I have that perspective and also another. When writing the narratives of the low-income mothers in this report, my focus was really on – there's a certain narrative about low-income mothers that they're overwhelmed – crack, whatever, drugs.

My narrative here was of women trying to take personal responsibility; trying to take responsibility for their lives; taking their role as mothers profoundly seriously, and being undercut; being undercut by their employers, being undercut by the lack of support from the community. And so in my view, the message is one of people who are trying to take personal responsibility but need the help of the community in order to do that effectively.

MS. BOUSHEY: I'm going to take – sort of follow up on exactly what you said, Joan, and sort of lob it back to Judy for a second. On these narratives, do you – I think the audience would be very interested to hear, what kind of narratives do you think that the media finds most compelling?

And this narrative, as the way Joan described them, that using individuals and their stories of personal responsibility as a way of getting the government's role or society's role, do you think that's a compelling issue for the media? We talked a little bit in the ante room of the – the green room – about the coverage of this report, so I don't know if you'd like to comment on that.

MS. WARNER: I think stories with conflict are always the most compelling; stories that have some twist where there's something that's unexpected – up to a point – and yet, stories that don't challenge conventional wisdom too deeply, either, because if the same thing has been repeated in newsrooms over a course of many years, it's going to be very hard to dislodge a certain way of thinking.

MS. BOUSHEY: That's interesting. I want to turn the questioning to Arlene here for a moment. You've talked a little bit about how we're in tough economic times and we know that millions of families are out of work.

So how do you see – how do you think that your members see these challenges around work-family conflict both today but also beyond the recession? Do you think that these will be issues that will mobilize your members in the years to come?

We sort of talked about this as both the right time but also families are really struggling with getting jobs. What's your take on what your members think is really important now and sort of over the next couple years?

MS. HOLT BAKER: Well, our members absolutely think that these work and – balance between work and family are important issues now and in the future. We certainly know that we can mobilize around it.

If you take equal pay, that has never left our agenda. And not just for women and the labor movement but also our brothers in the labor movement. So flex time – that still continues to be a major issue. Is that a policy they will move on?

And I can tell you, when you look at some of the organizations that have been at the forefront of fighting for the sick leave policies, such as in Washington, D.C., San Francisco – unfortunately, Milwaukee, we have it and it's in the courts.

You've seen the trade union movement be front and center, and you've had our people putting our – not just voices behind it but boots on the ground to push for this kind of public policy. So absolutely, we are here now and we will continue to be in the future.

MS. BOUSHEY: That's great. Any comments? Let me go onto the next thing that I wanted to touch on here. So given what you just said, that people are supportive of these, and given the things that you said, that you think people of faith are supportive of these, and the urgency and the importance of these issues, why do you think that the United States has not put these issues front and center?

And Joan, I'd like to start here with you and sort of go down the row here. Why aren't we there yet? And do the different ways that work-family conflict arise among different groups, is that what it is or is there something else? What do you think is the crux of the problem?

MS. WILLIAMS: It's partly the design of the policies that we've had that has triggered this class conflict between the have-a-littles and the have-nots. And so I think that's part of the problem.

But I also think that the progressives have not really framed these issues in an effective way and basically what we need is more social benefits and more workers rights. And in case you haven't noticed, we don't have a lot of either. And so one of the goals of this report and of the kinds of efforts of the whole community that's working towards work-family – the resolution of work-family conflict – is to try to think of reframings.

For example, to say that our goal is to support personal responsibility. That's obviously not a traditional, progressive framing. On the other hand, saying that we're working for widespread social benefits is maybe not going to catch on like wildfire.

MS. WARNER: I think that there is a kind of sense of impossibility around these issues that's been internalized by a lot of people on a lot of different levels. And I think that's part of the reason that we don't sense more interest in and support for these issues than there actually is, if you ask the question specifically. I think it may lie behind, in a sense, why there's less coverage than there might be; the sense that these are unchangeable problems.

And I think there's almost a lack of modeling, too, because we don't have a lot of workable solutions already, in the U.S., that we can point to and that people can see can work in an American context.

There are some similarities to the debates on health care that we had before, where we looked overseas critically most of the time, or at least, many of our commentators looked overseas critically, and the public kind of went along.

And we're always very quick to look critically at Europe and talk about their failing economies and their loaded social safety net and not to speak positively about what's going on over there. So I think, in some ways, there has been a kind of failure of imagination.

MS. BOUSHEY: Well, and do you think that some of the challenge in the lack of modeling – I'm often struck that, especially as Joan and I worked on this report, the challenges that families face with this basket of issues are, oftentimes, everybody faces them but, for every family, they're unique.

Somebody's kid gets out of school at 3:00, somebody's kid gets out of school at 3:15; somebody's got an ailing grandmother who lives in another state, somebody's grandma lives in their home, right? What workers need is oftentimes different, which makes it hard sometimes to think about one rule for all workers.

Do you think that plays a role in this? That part of the impossibility is it's a little bit nebulous, it's hard to get our fingers on it, in a sense?

MS. WILLIAMS: I hope not. For me, it's not that ambiguous. For me, we do have a workplace that's perfectly designed for the workforce of 1960, for that Ozzie-and-Harriet workforce that you so aptly described. And what we simply need is a shift from that old-fashioned design of the ideal worker to a new design of a worker that's balancing work with other important responsibilities – typically, family responsibilities.

The other thing, though, I do want to pick up on is Judy's sense of a failure of imagination. One of the initiatives that I'm very involved with right now is bringing together best practices to introduce workplace flexibility for minimum-wage workers.

Our image of what flexibility is, is an individually negotiated, flexible work arrangement. That is not going to work – on the line, that's not going to work for pink-collar workers. And I do think we have not provided a vivid image of, this is how you redesign this particular workplace around the workforce you actually have. And so I do think that's an important challenge for those of us working in this field.

I think, again, with health care, there was some focus on success stories or places that could offer some kind of model of alternative ways of working. Cleveland Clinic was talked about; the health insurance benefits that members of Congress have was always talked about.

There are all sorts of success stories that we could be talking about in terms of family policy, in terms of child care, in terms of after-school programs, access to day care. On so many different levels, there are examples that could be given and that could be expanded upon.

MS. BOUSHEY: Well, I'd like to turn this same question to you two, to Jen and Arlene, about the, why aren't we there yet? And do you think that the different ways that work-family conflict arises among different groups – do you think that has anything to do with it? What are your thoughts on that?

MS. HOLT BAKER: Well, I think one of the reasons that we haven't moved further in this country is because we have seen a decline in workers' ability to bargain collectively. And had we not seen that kind of decline – I mean, we certainly know productivity is up and wages are down – are a result of not having workers who have collective bargaining in this country. We could have been able to bargain, at least at the table, some of these policies which would move our public policy agenda.

So I think one of the things – not just think – I'm absolutely convinced that if we were able to make it easier for workers to form and join unions with the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, this would be one step towards helping us get closer to our goal.

REV. BUTLER: Yeah, and I sit here thinking, religious communities were at the forefront of some of these changes in the early 1900s at the forefront of the labor movement, this thing called the social gospel – that sin is not just personal, it's social, and that we need to create a society that makes it possible for everybody to be respected and to grow to the fullness of their being – all that kind of stuff. And that social gospel, I think, was very deliberately undermined by the culture wars that have framed family values and the family agenda in only one way.

And it's not to say that the issues of abortion and gay rights aren't important. They are very important to people on all sides of that issue. But I think that has also prevented us from really focusing on the broad array of family issues. And it's no mistake that a lot of corporations have also funded that sort of culture war and the organizations that make up the culture war.

And I think, though, that the good news is there's a way to break through to that and to – I think, we've refrained from building the kinds of alliances we could have built because of the culture wars that have driven us into our unique little camps on either side sort of yelling at each other, but if we can find ways to build trust and to really sit down and listen to one another, we can build the alliances we need to make this happen.

MS. BOUSHEY: That was very optimistic. I wanted to ask you all one more question before I open it up to the audience. And this is sort of – I know that we all have families of some sort and we're experts or people thinking about it in a certain way, but I wanted to throw the question out to you: As a citizen, what is it that you would like to hear from this kind of panel today? I know everybody has their own struggles with work-family conflict. What is it that you would like to hear the most? And then we'll open it up to the audience. Anybody? Any thoughts? That's a tough one.

MS. HOLT BAKER: Well, having gone through this experience most recently, the sandwich generation that we're in, in trying to manage taking care of – still assisting with adult children – (chuckles) – because they're returning home, as we know, and also with elder care. I

mean, the sandwich generation, we really are challenged between our children and our parents. So that would be something I'm interested in.

MS. BOUSHEY: And one that I think we don't talk enough – we talk a lot about kids and sometimes, we don't talk about those issues enough.

MS. HOLT BAKER: We kind of keep it in the shadows, but we've got to bring that out more because seem not to want to talk about it.

MS. WILLIAMS: As someone who has spent a long time studying the white working class – I mean, we were saying in the green room, African-Americans tend to get issues of social structure and power. Whites are a little bit more challenged that way, although we love us. (Chuckles.)

But one of the very strong values of the white working class is that family comes first. And as a citizen, what I would like to see is the progressive community saying, you know what, family comes first for us, too, and we're going to put aside what our aspirations are and we're going to have discussions about what constitutes a family.

That's an important issue – very important issue – but we all share this. We share that we love our family members and that we need to care for them and that this can be part of the healing of a society that's become really, really riven by a lot of very divisive conflicts.

MS. WARNER: I guess, in terms of what I'd like to see, it comes back to what I said in the last round of questions. I would like to see homegrown solutions that are already in existence on a small scale and that could perhaps be widened out. I think that I would like to see real models for progress and that have been already time-tested and that we could learn from.

And I think just on a more abstract level I'd love to hear more questioning of some of the images we have in our heads about families and about mothers in particular – because we haven't addressed that specifically. But mothers are sort of the turning point of all of this. It's the changes in mothers' roles that you were talking about economically that's so striking.

And I think that, especially for an older generation – and I'm putting myself in the older category – we have mothers in our heads that are at odds with who mothers actually are – even with who we really are. And I think that that has a very toxic effect on our ability to think constructively about these issues.

So I think we need to kind of deal with that and talk about that, think it through. And I also am hopeful for the future, though, because I think that the next generation actually has a very different image in their heads and that this will prove to be very productive.

REV. BUTLER: Yeah. I think one of the things I've been hoping for has started with this report and this conversation. And it's just a greater level of honesty about what people are really contending with and dealing with. And I think that every great movement has started with people telling – doing truth-telling, telling about their lives and telling what it's really like.

And I've made it part of my sort of hobby over the past several years, ever since I had a child six years ago and went into shock about how hard it was – (laughter) – to interview every single family I meet. And part of that is political and part of that is personal because I'm like, well, how the hell are you making it? And why do you look so nice today? (Laughter.) Like, how did you find time to put those earrings on – and you have three kids! And I just have one.

You know, there is that deep curiosity. And I think it's not just me that feels it. I used to think it was just me and that people must think I was weird on the playground, sort of interviewing them and prying into their life. And now I'm stepping back and thinking about that; I'm like, I think they're interviewing me, too.

Everybody is trying to figure out how everybody is making it. And, yet, we're not confessing that we are barely making it. (Laughter.) We're trying to make ourselves look good. And I've got coffee stains down the front of my shirt this morning and I was up at 1 (o'clock) in the morning with a sick child. So I'll just confess – and let's all start to confess – it's damn hard out there. And maybe if we all start doing that we'll create a movement.

MS. BOUSHEY: And with that we'd like to hear from you all. So I'm going to start here in the back, in the very back. And there is a microphone. Christine (sp) will bring around the microphone.

Q: Thank you. Hi, Peggy Abrahamson (sp) – and I'm here just on my own though I work at the U.S. Department of Labor, office of public affairs. But I want to – I have a lot of passion about this issue as a working mom for 27 years now – (chuckles) – with two daughters and a lot of interesting experiences in the work world.

But what I want to say is I don't think that there has been enough attention to kids and how kids are affected by working parents and workplace issues. I'd like to see more of that. I like what you just said about talking to people. I think it would be great to have, boy, Capitol Hill or some huge group or the AFL-CIO do a bunch of focus groups and actually talk to people and find out what is happening in people's lives with childcare and sick-child care and elderly care and everything. I don't think that's really been done in the way it needs to be done, for some reason.

Like I read everything; I work in Family Institute and all kinds of things. And I'd like to see that – and I'd like to be involved in that, actually. (Chuckles.) And one of the things that happened to me a bunch of years ago is I was a speechwriter and I had a young baby. And I saw that we didn't have as big of a need in our office at the time – and I begged; I had to beg to telework one day a week in the government. And, finally, they were like, okay, one day a week you can take off and telework.

And then another time I had a thing where I could work two or three days a week teleworking. But because I was a newer speechwriter at the agency I only did it one day a week because I wanted to get to know people in the building and everything. But it was just kind of nice to know that I could have that flexibility.

And it let me go to a soccer practice once in a while or it let me cook a nice dinner once in a while. I still worked the hours. And, actually, the whole time was a speechwriter, for 11 years, I worked overtime most of that time. Every night I'd get on the computer from like 9 (o'clock) to midnight. And that's one of the things somebody was saying.

I think you said it, Heather, that – about how, well, maybe this would cost too much. I'd say, my experience in 27 years is, uh-uh, I don't believe that because if you give workers some flexibility and then they can be more productive because they're more relaxed; they're not stressed out about their families, about getting to a medical appointment. And, no, it would not actually – workers would be so excited and happy that then they'd say, well, my employer is awesome and I'm going to work overtime for no – you know? That's what I think.

MS. BOUSHEY: Any – yeah, go ahead.

MS. BAKER: I commend her on being able to get that telecommuting day. But I would be very concerned if we move into a direction where workers start to work this overtime and not be compensated for it because, as we spoke earlier about that –

Q: (Inaudible, off mike) – on my own. I think the bottom line would be improved if you – (inaudible).

MS. BAKER: But those are just, those are some of the challenges that we must look at when we talk about this flexibility, that workers don't get hurt.

MS. WILLIAMS: And it doesn't sound like the speaker, this was the case, but one of the things that my institute is studying now is something we call flexibility stigma where, often, when people are working flexible hours there is an aura of mistrust around the whole arrangement which means that that stigma causes them to sort of choose to work more and more and more. That is partly choice, but it's choice that's within a framework of sort of discrimination. So it doesn't sound like your case, but it is something that we have to be concerned about.

MS. BOUSHEY: Did you want to say anything about children? We'll take another question. So you over there in the glasses on the right?

Q: Hi. I'm Michael Rose. I'm a reporter with BNA's Daily Labor Report. I was really struck with what Joan said about reframing the debate in terms of progressives haven't traditionally said this is an issue of individual responsibility. I'm wondering if that's something you've seen at all or are beginning to see around things like the Healthy Families Act, which has been introduced. And how do you encourage that debate going forward? Are there any Republican cosponsors? I don't know off hand, but how do you sort of get to that point. Thanks.

MS. WILLIAMS: The only example of that I've seen is in the EEOC actually under the Bush administration adopted guidance on caregiver discrimination saying that it was illegal to

discriminate against caregivers in a lot of different contexts. And I happened to be testifying before the EEOC leading up to that.

And there was one exchange in which Naomi Earp, who was the Republican who was the head of the EEOC at the time, said, you know, I hear what you're saying about discrimination against mothers, but I'm in favor of personal responsibility. And I immediately said, I also am in favor of personal responsibility. What concerns me is that these are mothers who are trying to keep jobs, trying to support their families and that they are barred from doing so.

So I do think that it's an effective framing but I hold it out to others: Has this been used in other contexts? Anybody?

MS. BOUSHEY: I'll take a – moderator's privilege. I think that we did hear some of that kind of discourse around the H1N1 and paid sick days. Certainly there was a lot of conversation about how people, you know, the department of health is recommending that people keep their kids home from school. The responsible parent needs to find a place to keep that child and it can't be at the mall or at the daycare center because, by definition, that's not what the point was; it was to keep people from spreading this.

So I think you heard some of that. We didn't hear enough of it. But there were nascent underpinnings of that in that conversation, I thought. I don't know if anyone else – okay, let's go here and then we'll come over to this side.

Q: Hi, Danielle LeClaire (sp) with the Laborers Union. And I totally agree with what Ms. Holt Baker said. As an employment lawyer you get a little worried about those FLSA claims with overtime. So don't do that.

I really want to appreciate everything the panel said. I had a question for the panel and a comment. My comment is, in terms of making some progress, those of you who don't know – and I'm sure a lot of you in this room do – this week the defense bill is going to the House floor and it's going to the rules committee tomorrow night. Congresswoman Maloney from New York is going to offer her federal employee paid family leave bill as an amendment.

It overwhelmingly passed the House. Like other things, sort of a little stalled in the Senate. So we're hoping this will give it that little bit of momentum. So call your members of Congress and tell them to vote yes on the Maloney amendment this week.

But my question is, in bringing up health-care reform, those of us who worked on that the past few years, I actually asked a very, very good friend of ours in Congress, their staffer, why wasn't paid leave, why wasn't that included in the health-care reform act? That seemed like such a no-brainer to me and I think to some of us who work on this and have for years. And what we were told is the Blue Dogs; you know, some of the Republicans are our friends, but the Blue Dogs stopped it because of this fiscal argument and productivity and so forth. And I'm just wondering, in terms of framing, how do we get past that?

MS. WILLIAMS: This is sick days or paid leave?

MS. BOUSHEY: I think both. There were conversations about both. I mean, we certainly heard a lot that – I mean, I think that your point is well-taken, that it should have been a part of the health-care conversation; it wasn't.

What I was hearing from folks was that it was just too much; there was so much in that basket that it was – it was like this whole new benefit, a whole nother new conversation, that it was a lot to sort of put all in the same place. But there is so much evidence that these policies are good for business. The Council of Economic Advisors just came out with this report that talked about the productivity-enhancing qualities of workplace flexibility. We know paid sick days is good; it lowers turnover; it improves productivity.

So there's not a good fiscal argument against them. The Blue Dogs should really like this. And we think that paid family medical leave would actually increase women's employment rates overall and the disabled folks who are sort of marginally attached. I don't know if anyone has something to add on that?

MS. WILLIAMS: I mean, does it make sense to have workplaces that are designed for a workforce of 40 years ago? No. It doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make sense from a macroeconomic point of view; it doesn't make any sense from a microeconomic point of view. And there is a lot of data, as Heather points out, pointing that out.

MS. BOUSHEY: So let me go to Valerie over here and then we'll go –

Q: Good afternoon. My name is Valerie Young. I'm with the National Association of Mother Centers. I see a real conflict and I want to know how to – if you have a good way to resolve it. On the one hand, in order to be successful with these kinds of policies they have to be framed in a universal way like: Paid sick leave is good for all workers – whether you have children or whether you don't have children because they lend themselves to a great multiplicity of circumstances; parental leave, paid school leave, all of those things.

On the other hand, going to the whole mothers' issues – I mean, women's issues – I hate the expression “women's issues” but there are certain ways in which it's very apt. Right now with women more than 50 percent or at least 50 percent of the workforce we're in a particularly powerful spot. Plus we still do disproportionately the childcare and the running of households – plus we're not being paid equally; plus we don't have the systemic and institutional supports like paid sick days, paid leave, child care funded to the extent that it ought to be, as widely available as it ought to be.

And we're still doing all of this. We know that women are very reluctant to ask for things, to negotiate for themselves. There have been studies. They don't ask for raises as often. They don't ask for raises or promotions as high because there is just something – I don't know what it is, but we don't.

This would be a great time maybe for somebody to write a book about how we do it all anyways. We're doing all of these things. And we have a 1.9 to 2.1 birthrate, which is higher

than in many other Western European countries where they have many more supports for mothers and support maternal employment.

We're doing it all. It's not too much to have it all. We actually, when you consider the children that we are giving to our country and our society and the work that we are doing and the taxes that we are paying and the unpaid labor that we are doing, this should be a reason to get angry and to say, it's okay for us to make these changes; it's entirely legitimate.

MS. BOUSHEY: Are you saying we're our own worst enemy?

Q: I'm saying that we let ourselves be intimidated when perhaps in order for these social justice initiatives that you are talking about to be successful there has to be a real mothers' movement. The American woman has been put upon – particularly the American mother – and given so much. And she has gotten self-monitoring, self-monitoring, self-censoring. She has not been well-served thus far. (Laughter.)

MS. BOUSHEY: So I'm sure you all have thoughts on that. (Laughter.)

MS. WARNER: I've always had a bit of a problem with the idea of a mothers' movement – although I think that the group Moms Rising, in particular, has been incredibly effective in bringing people together, in raising awareness of these family issues and of making it easy for people to get politically involved.

I think that narrowing it down to mothers excludes too many people. I think it ghettoizes the issue. But I also think, I mean, in the message I hear you sending is sort of asking for a feminist framing of these issues. It's not going to fly. Nobody wants to hear it. Younger women don't see themselves that way. They don't think in these terms. They think everything has been achieved. The words bounce right off of them. They think it doesn't apply to them.

And then of course there is the long-standing hostility to anything that sounds too feminist, anything that sounds too much like it's "for women." There is still such – I mean, I really feel there is such strong underlying hostility toward women in our society and particularly in the public discourse. I really think there is.

And that's why I think – and I think this cynically; I don't think this in some kind of lovely way – cynically I think we need to reframe this around children.

REV. BUTLER: What about a parents' movement?

MS. WARNER: I think it's – again, I think it's too narrow. I think that we need something that doesn't exclude non-parents. I don't think there is a reason to specifically exclude non-parents.

MS. HOLT BAKER: I was just struck by that because I was thinking when you said "write the book" it's kind of like women – we do have the power now: We're in the workplace. Actually, we – I think we're even starting to outvote the men. So we've got the power but we're

not acting like it. So how do we – this movement around, even with the younger people, they think it has been achieved. So okay, if they believe that it has been achieved then wouldn't they believe that, okay, we have this power. So can we go further? So how could we drive that kind of an agenda?

MS. WARNER: (Inaudible, off mike) – modeling, again, that has to happen. What I hear that's so – I find, devastating, from younger women – is that they accept the limitations of our time as natural. And when they look ahead to being in their 30s, let's say, they just sort of throw up their hands and say, I'm never going to be able to do all of that. How will I – what – you know, they're already saying to themselves, what kind of compromises am I going to have to make?

And so I think that we've – there has been some kind of failure of transmission in the message of what a life is supposed to be, what a full and successful life is supposed to be. And we need to rediscover that and convey it better.

MS. WILLIAMS: Just in the interest of – I mean, I'm usually the glass-half-empty person but I guess today I'm going to be the glass-half-full person. (Laughter.) One of the things that is exciting. I hear everything that Judy is saying and I've been there and I am there at some level.

On the other hand, one of the things that has really been exciting for me to see, as someone who has been a feminist for a very long time – and an activist for a very long time – is that many younger men are just not interested in the job description of the baby boomers. Partly this is the silver lining of the way – you know, to speak in the vernacular – capitalism has treated its workers.

And so some of these younger men have seen their fathers basically give up their lives to their jobs and then get summarily fired at age 50 – even white-collar workers, the way blue-collar workers have always been fired. And that has caused, I think, some disinvestment, some questioning about how glorious it is to be one of those ideal workers who gets the brass ring.

At the same time, these younger men are married not to the likes of us because I'm too old but to the likes of some of you. And they have very different expectations in their marriages. And so both for themselves and because of their family commitments I think the younger men, if you look demographically, these are still a minority but they are really increasing sharply, these younger men who are willing, for example, to take family leave often at some considerable peril.

Talk about flexibility stigma – a man who takes family leave in many workplaces triggers it very strongly – or are willing even to go part-time. And so I do think that the glass is half empty with a vengeance but I also think the glass is half full. And I remain quite hopeful.

MS. BOUSHEY: So one last question. We'll take you – yeah.

Q: Hi. My name is Erika Tirm (ph) and I'm representing the DGA here today. But this is more of a personal issue for me. You said younger women aren't really interested in this. I'm

19 years old and this is a very big concern of mine. I've heard my mom talk about this so much and I'm a bit surprised to come in and hear you guys talking about it because I've never heard it outside of my home. So I'm just kind of like, wow.

My question is, how can we reach the younger generation with this issue? Because I know for me personally and my girlfriends we are looking at our mothers and these women that we look up to and we're just like, well, I guess we're just going to have to follow them and just kind of do this because this is what they're doing and they seem to be making it work. So what would be your recommendation for reaching younger people?

MS. BOUSHEY: On that – what will hopefully be a hopeful note – I'd invite all of you for any final remarks or comments, if you'd like to say anything.

MS. WILLIAMS: I mean, I'll just say, I've been working on this issue for 20 years. And I guess I feel very hopeful because when I started to work on this issue, the only issues on the agenda for the likes of me were – all important issues – domestic violence, sexual harassment and a variety of other issues. But work-family was not on the radar screen. And I felt that I was out there sort of hanging.

And it's so exciting for me to have an event like this at CAP, to be able to have a wonderful partnership with Heather, to have this wonderful young lady who is telling us all, these younger women do care about these issues and they're looking for us – they're looking to us for answers. And that's what we are trying very hard to provide.

MS. WARNER: And I would say the message should be that these are political issues. These aren't just personal issues and these can't just be viewed as personal issues because that leads to a dead end; that leads to a wall.

And I – really my much-noted-upon negativity was about the – I think what I heard as a request for a more overtly feminist message that I just think that that particular messaging, unfortunately, doesn't go very far.

REV. BUTLER: Yeah, and I have a lot of hope in terms of the changing trends within faith communities and this new generation coming along, like I mentioned earlier, and then the more shared responsibility I see statistically and experientially of men and women sharing the burden within families. I mean, I think that is going to shift the power balance and bring more people into these issues. So I think the time is ripe.

MS. HOLT BAKER: And, Jennifer, you said to kind of share our own stories. I'm very hopeful because I have a young – I'd say young children – actually, a little older than you. And they are very concerned about these issues: my daughter and my son-in-law. They think about it quite differently – a shared experience. And so I think that the future looks very bright for young people.

The AFL-CIO, we just recently did a young workers' survey. And I was very optimistic after reading that survey about the concerns that young people have, young workers have. So I

think we have a bright future. I think we have a movement in the making if we're willing to really move forward.

MS. BOUSHEY: Well, thank you all so much. This has been a fantastic panel. Please join me in thanking them. (Applause.)

(END)