



Hope Bennett, Chair
Caroline Kunitake, Vice-Chair
Jennifer Li Dotson, Member
Valerie Lam, Member
Raven Sevilleja, Member
Helen Stewart, Member
Renee Sonobe Hong, Ex-Officio

Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women *Kōmike Kāko 'o Wāhine o ke Kalana 'o Honolulu*

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

925 Dillingham Boulevard, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, November 1, 2024

1:00 p.m.

Kapālama Hale, Conference Room 277
925 Dillingham Boulevard, Honolulu, Hawai'i
Via ZOOM

1. Call to Order

Committee Members present: Hope Bennett, Caroline Kunitake, Jennifer Li Dotson, Valerie Lam, Helen Stewart and Ex-Officio Member Renee Sonobe Hong

Committee Members absent: Raven Sevilleja

Staff Resources Personnel for the Committee present at the meeting:

Shane Akagi, Administrator, DCS, Office of Grants Management (OGM)

Lauren Jagla, DCS/OGM

Spenser Kunishige, DCS/OGM

Tammy Ngo, DCS/OGM

Blessing Quon, DCS/OGM

Marsha Tamura, DCS/OGM

Kathleen Kelly, Deputy Corporation Counsel, assigned to the Committee

The meeting of the Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women (HCCSW) was called to order by Chair Hope Bennett (Chair) at 1:08 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes: October 4, 2024 Meeting

Chair Bennett asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 4, 2024 Meeting. Vice-Chair Kunitake made the motion, Member Stewart seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

3. Public Testimony on all Agenda Items

There was no oral (in person or online) testimony or written testimony for this meeting.

4. Testimony/Comments from Department Agencies

Mr. Akagi updated the Committee on his work with the Grants in Aid process and the Department of Emergency Management. He also provided information about Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).

Mr. Akagi announced Member Sevilleja's resignation from HCCSW and confirmed that the Managing Directors Office has been notified of this and other upcoming vacancies. He requested that Committee Members inform OGM staff of their plans to renew their terms to ensure proper updates for filling positions. Vice-Chair Kunitake and Member Stewart confirmed they will not renew their terms once they end.

5. Paid Family Leave Project - Updates from Committee Members

Vice-Chair Kunitake stated that the Paid Family Leave poll will be finalized in January 2025. When the results are ready, DCS's Public Information Officer will post the poll results on HCCSW website and will be including the results of the poll in the newsletter that is sent to all County employees. Vice-Chair Kunitake shared that Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) is having monthly meetings for individuals who are interested in supporting Paid Family Leave. Chair Bennett thanked Vice-Chair Kunitake for helping the Committee follow through with this project.

6. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Letter of Support for the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

Chair Bennett shared that she believed that someone has accepted the position of the Executive Director for the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women so the Committee will not be sending a letter of support at this time. She stated she hopes to have more information next month and would be interested in having that person join HCCSW for a future meeting.

7. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Following and Supporting Bills During the Legislative Session

Ms. Kelly shared that in respect to Paid Family Leave, beside the survey and letter of support, Committee Members can meet with legislators and other Committee Chair's to share the Data. She stated two to three members can be appointed for that. If three members, they would break into a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG). She

stated the Members would be identified then they can talk about the scope of their authority which would be preparing testimony, letters of support, compiling data, meeting with legislator staff or legislators to explain and support data and to coordinate with HCAN and other supporters of Paid Family Leave. Ms. Kelly also stated that for other measures where the Committee might want to submit testimony supporting things that the Committee has supported as a policy matter, they can do the same thing where they would appoint two to three members to track and support initiatives on issues and topics that the Committee has identified. Chair Bennett thanked Ms. Kelly for the information and stated that the Committee can go through that process of appointing members and decide which option would be the best route for them at a future meeting.

8. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Area of Focus for Upcoming Year

Chair Bennett opened a discussion about potential areas of focus for the Committee in the upcoming year and proposed topics for exploration. She encouraged the Committee Members to share their interests and suggest areas for research where the Committee may be able to fill gaps. Vice-Chair Kunitake emphasized the need to focus on developing women as leaders. Member Stewart and Ex-Officio Member Sonobe Hong agreed on that point and believe that starting leadership training as early as middle school would be beneficial. Chair Bennett suggested that the Commission explore potential community partners who are already doing this work, especially in schools, to build on existing initiatives. Member Dotson highlighted the effectiveness of dashboards in promoting accountability in gender equity which could be used amongst all Honolulu County Commissions. She also shared that a topic she is interested in is pay wage equity.

Chair Bennett encouraged the Committee to continue to brainstorm and share additional ideas for the upcoming meeting's agenda, emphasizing a focus on pay equity, accountability, and leadership development. Chair Bennett stated further exploration of these topics will be continued in the next meeting.

9. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Succession Planning for Committee Members

Chair Bennett discussed the process for filling vacancies, asking how Members could refer candidates. Mr. Akagi explained that interested candidates should submit their resume and contact information to him for forwarding to the chief of staff. Ex-Officio Member Sonobe Hong emphasized the chief of staff's interest in receiving recommendations.

Vice-Chair Kunitake highlighted Hawai'i County's Commission on the Status of Women as an example of structured membership terms to maintain continuity and suggested reducing meeting frequency to six times a year, skipping less ideal months like December and summer months. She stressed the importance of ensuring quorum and timely decisions, especially for budgeting. She also noted that

with anticipated disasters, government budgets will likely focus on mitigation and recovery, making it crucial to fully utilize allocated funds to remain a priority in future budgets.

Member Lam joined the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Chair Bennett stated that the Committee can look into supporting staggered terms to avoid simultaneous retirements. Member Stewart suggested aligning succession planning with key sectors, ensuring representation for county priorities like children or education issues. Ex-Officio Member Sonobe Hong inquired about the possibility of staggering terms under current regulations. Ms. Kelly and Mr. Akagi explained that the initial 4-year terms are fixed by statute, with potential flexibility for staggered terms in second appointments, though aligning terms with the Mayor's Office makes it challenging.

10. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Frequency of Committee Meetings

Chair Bennett noted that while the Commission is expected to meet monthly, it is permitted to meet every other month. She suggested this change could make participation more appealing by reducing the time commitment but acknowledged it might complicate timely budget spending and project execution. She asked for the Committee's feedback on whether this adjustment would ease commitments for current members and attract more volunteers or hinder the Commission's effectiveness. While acknowledging the schedule benefit, Member Lam expressed concern that meeting every other month could hinder the Committee's progress, as gaps in meetings might slow momentum and limit opportunities to move projects forward. Chair Bennett agreed with the points raised and wondered if meetings could be adjusted on a case-by-case basis, such as skipping a meeting if it's not necessary. Ms. Kelly confirmed that the Committee has the flexibility to adjust meetings as needed. Member Stewart suggested a compromise of meeting monthly except for December and June. Chair Bennett agreed, proposing that the Committee meet monthly with the understanding that December and one summer meeting would typically be skipped, allowing flexibility to adjust if needed.

11. FOR DISCUSSION: Agenda Setting for the Next Meeting

Chair Bennett stated that she will work with OGM staff on the next meeting's agenda and encouraged the Committee to share their ideas or topics that they may want on the upcoming meeting's agenda. She recapped some of the topics talked about during this meeting such as pay equity, accountability, and leadership development.

12. Next Meeting: To Be Determined

The Committee agreed to skip the December 6, 2024 meeting and schedule the next

meeting in January. OGM staff will send a poll to the Committee Members for the next HCCSW meeting.

13. Adjournment

With no further items on the agenda, Chair Bennett adjourned the meeting at 2:13 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

SHANE AKAGI, OGM Administrator

DATE

APPROVED:

HOPE BENNETT, Chair



‘OHANA FIRST

PaidLeaveHawaii.org



HCAN *Speaks!*
Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network



HCAN
Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network

What is paid family and medical leave (PFML)?

Paid family leave allows workers to take **time off**
and still receive part of their **income**
when they **need to**

Qualifying reasons for paid leave



**care for
their own
serious health
needs**



**care for
the serious
health needs of a
loved one**



**to bond with a
new child.**



Family Leave

- Bonding
- Caring
- Active Duty



Medical Leave

To recover from
one's own serious
illness or injury



Safe Leave

To deal with
domestic violence

How would a PFML program work in Hawai‘i?

1

Be a state-run benefit program, like Social Security or Medicare.

2

Be funded by **small payroll deductions** that go into a state fund, which workers apply to when they need to take leave.

3

Employers would not need to pay employees while they are on leave, since they are paid from the state fund.

4

Would be available to both full and part-time workers.

5

Provide **up to 12 weeks for parental leave and up to 26 weeks for caregiving** (our current TDI standard).

6

Provide a higher portion of wages to lower-income workers, so they can afford to take the leave.

7

Ensure that employees have a job to go back to after they take leave.



PAID FAMILY LEAVE HAWAII RESIDENT SURVEY

Prepared by Anthology FINN Partners

December 2024

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The Hawaii Children’s Action Network (HCAN) contracted Anthology Research to conduct a quantitative online survey of Hawaii residents to gain an understanding of Hawaii residents’ perspectives on Paid Family Leave. In particular, the following objectives were identified:

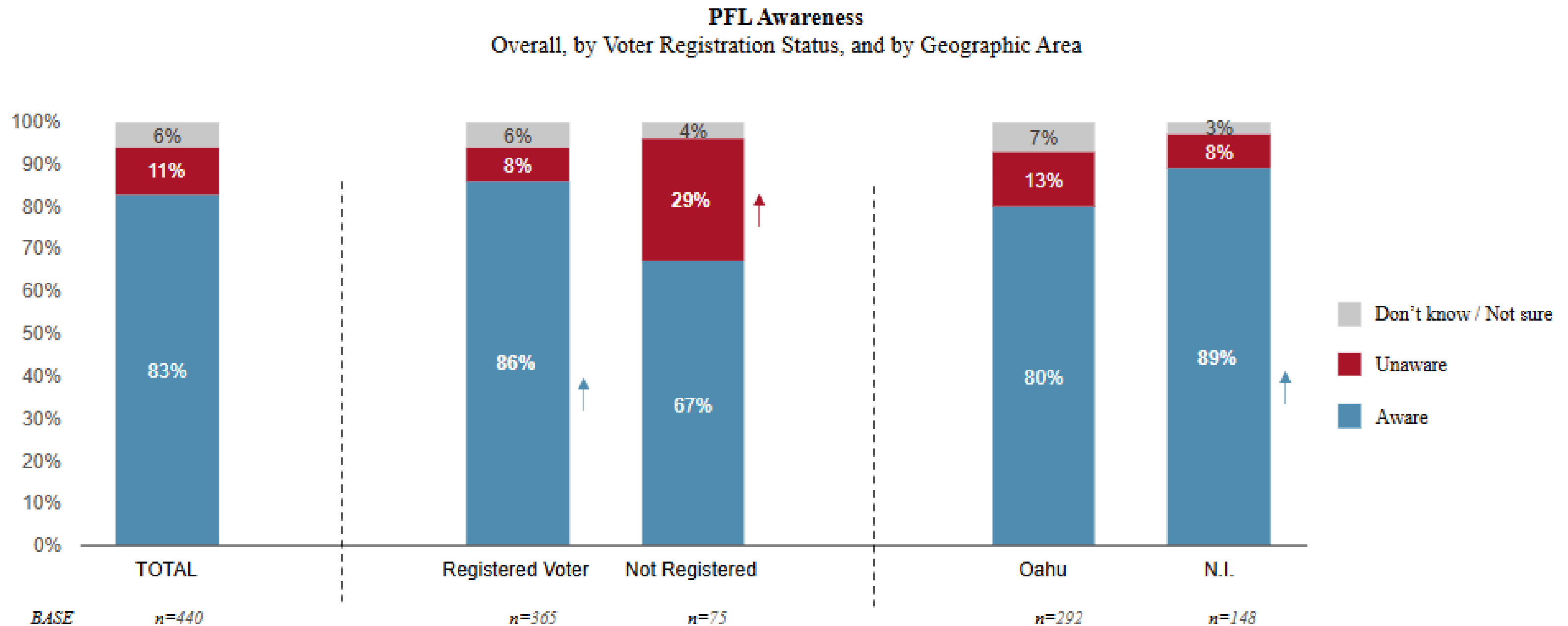
- Gauge awareness of current Paid Family Leave policies in Hawaii
- Measure resident demand for Paid Family Leave
- Better understand rationale for support of or opposition to Paid Family Leave legislation
- Inform messaging and communications to increase support of Paid Family Leave legislation

Data Collection

Data collection began on November 18, 2024, and ended on November 30, 2024. A total of n=440 completed surveys were collected during this time period, resulting in a margin of error for the overall sample of +/- 4.67% at the 95% level of confidence. The sample for this online study was provided by third-party online sample providers, augmented by publicly available lists of Hawaii residents and Anthology FINN Partner’s proprietary panel of Hawaii residents who have opted to participate in research studies. Research respondents were screened to ensure they were 18 years of age or older and were full-time residents of the state of Hawaii.

PFL AWARENESS | Overview

There is high awareness levels of PFL, especially among registered voters.

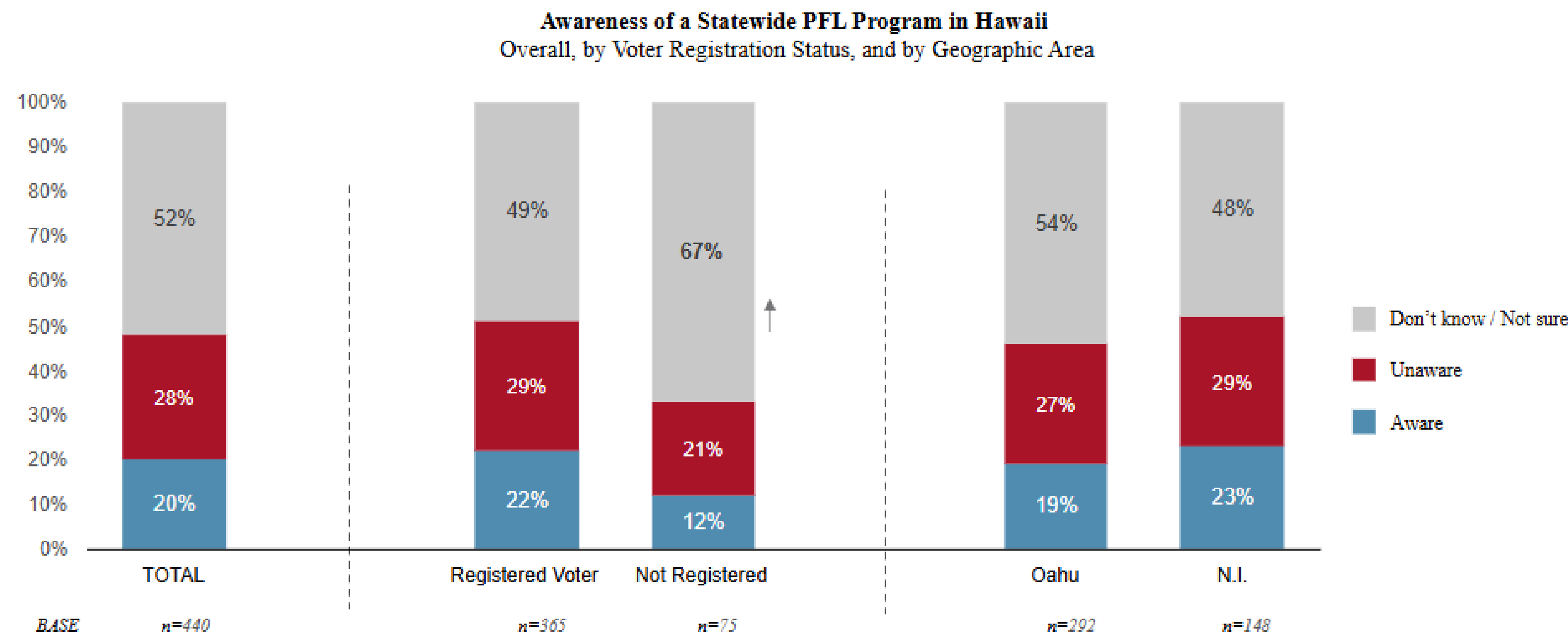


Q. Have you ever heard the term "paid family leave?"

* Arrows indicate that the value next to the arrow is statistically greater ($p < 0.05$) compared to other values within the same group. Totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

HAWAII PFL AWARENESS | Overview

One in five Hawaii residents believes the State already has PFL program.

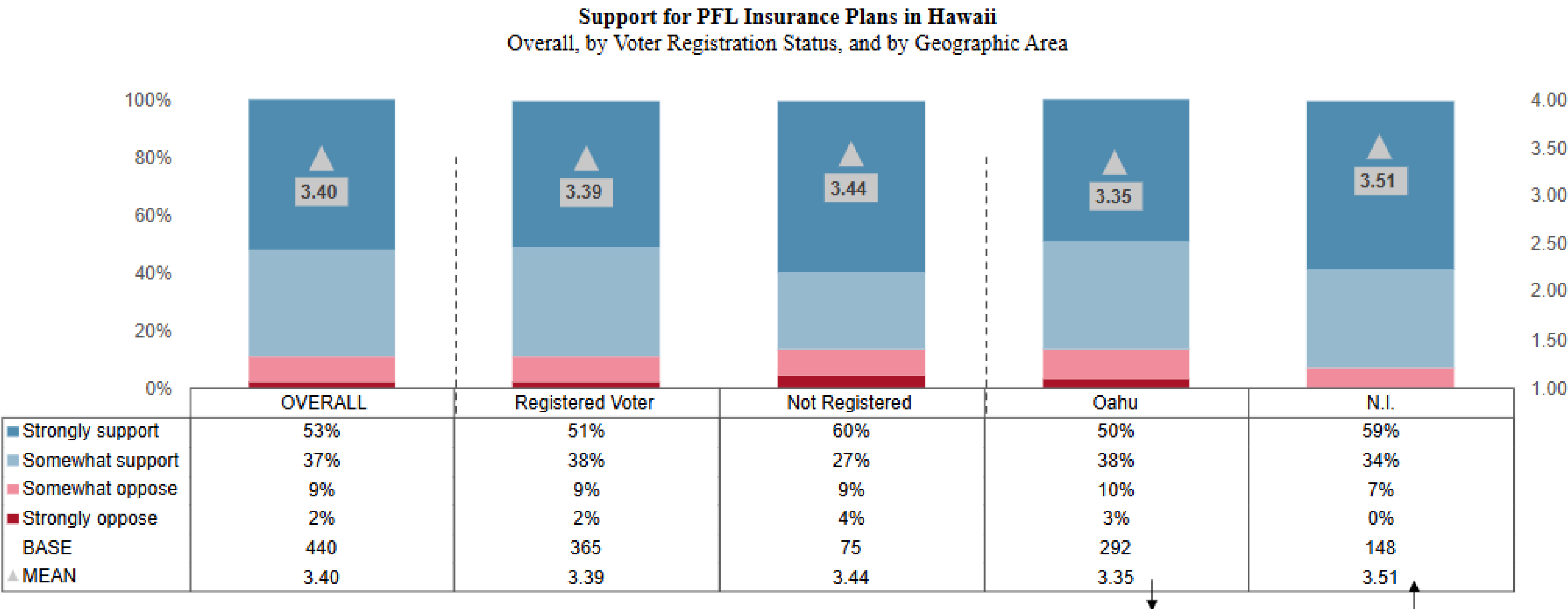


Q. Based on what you know or have heard, does Hawaii currently have a statewide paid family leave program?

* Arrows indicate that the value next to the arrow is statistically greater ($p < 0.05$) compared to other values within the same group. Totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

PFL SUPPORT | Overview

A majority of Hawaii residents support a PFL insurance plan for employees.



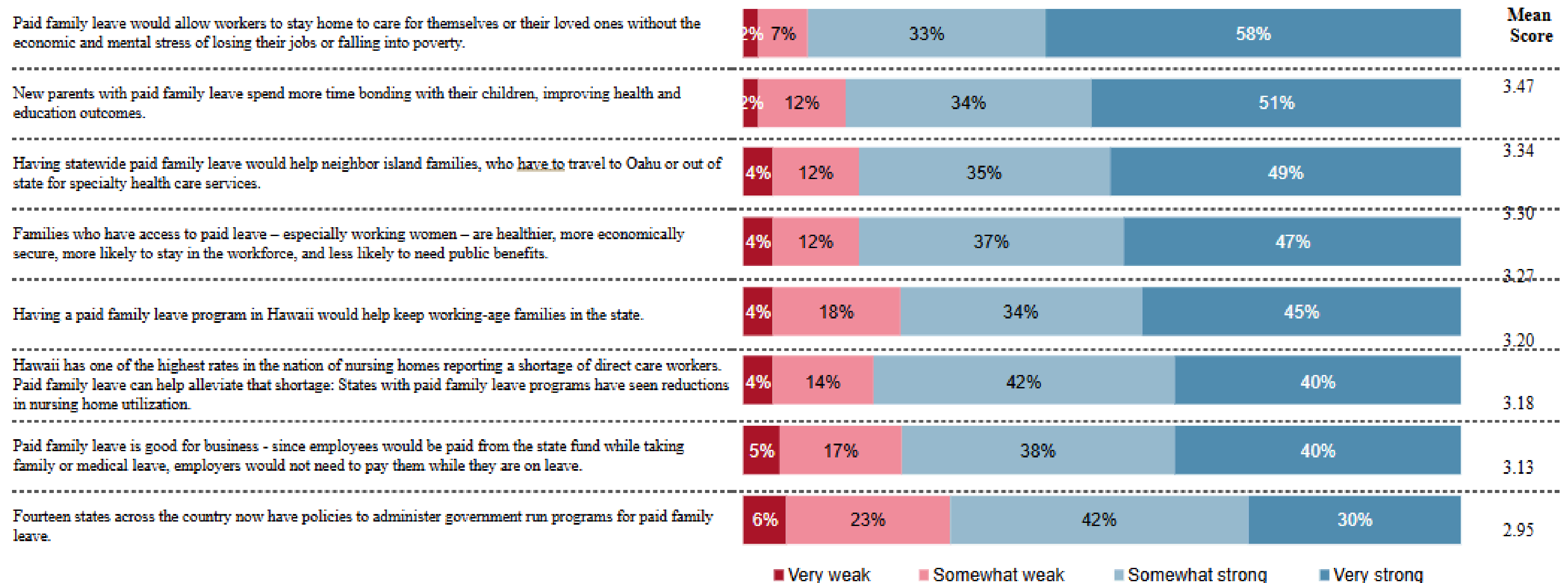
Q. In general, do you support or oppose creation of an insurance plan in Hawaii to provide paid family leave for employees to care for a sick family member, bond with a new baby or recover from a major injury or illness?

* Arrows indicate that the value next to the arrow is statistically greater ($p < 0.05$) compared to other values within the same group. Totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

PFL MESSAGING | Overview

The peace of mind argument resonates the strongest with Hawaii residents.

Messaging for the Creation of a PFL and Medical Leave Program in Hawaii

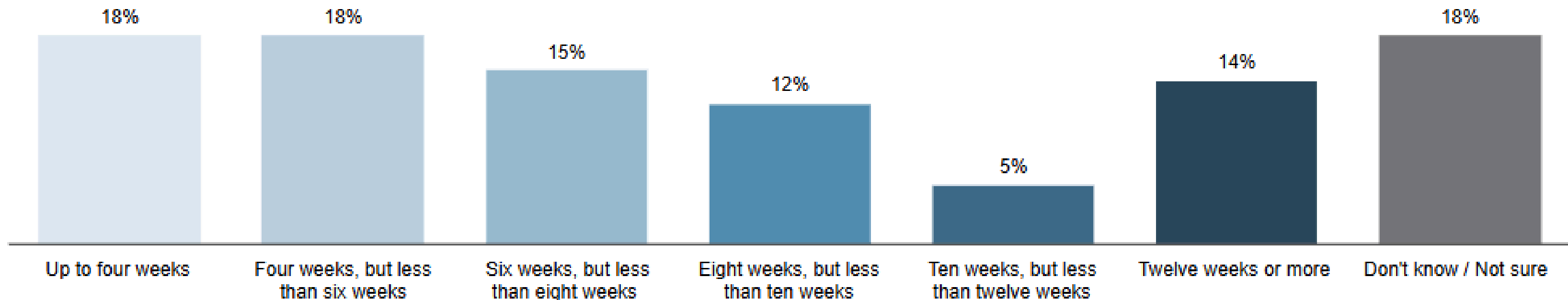


Q. How strong is the following as a reason to support creation of a paid family and medical leave program in Hawaii?

LENGTH OF PFL | Overview

Opinions of the appropriate length for PFL are mixed among Hawaii residents.

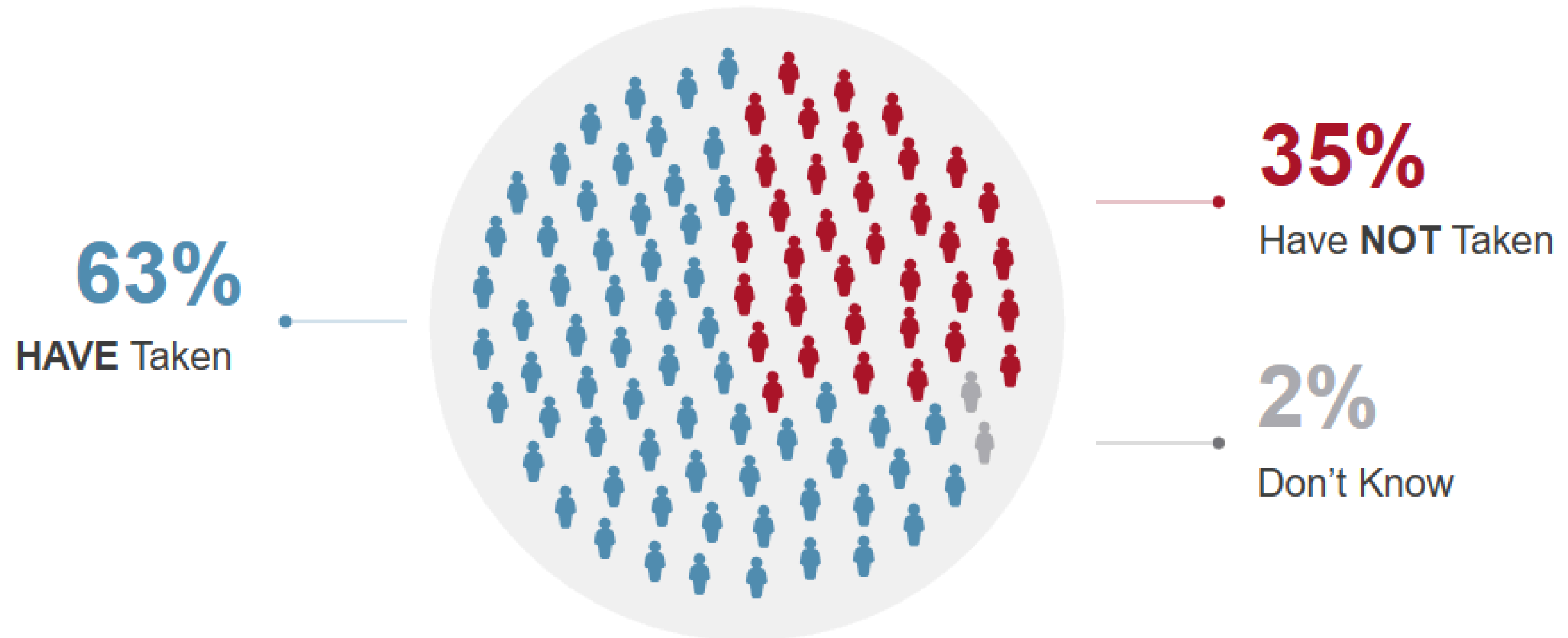
Perceived Appropriate Length of PFL



TIME OFF OF WORK | Overview

A majority of residents have taken time off of work because of an illness/injury or to care for someone else.

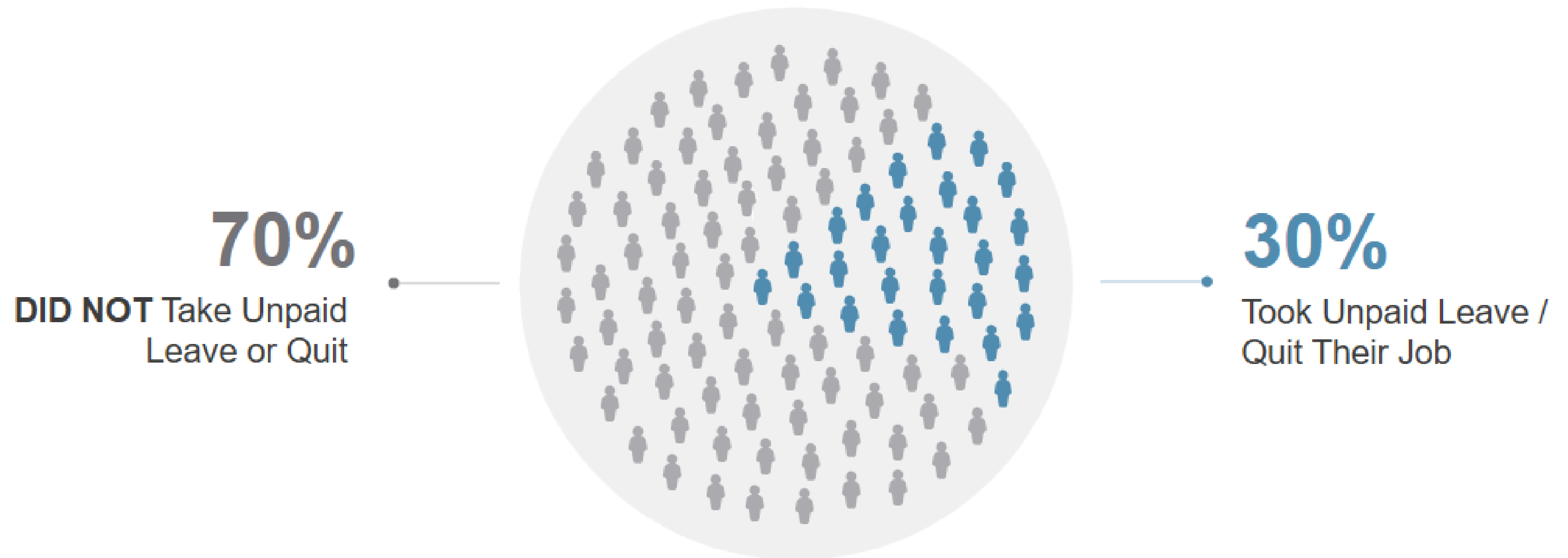
Proportion of Hawaii Residents Who Took Time Off of Work for Care or Injury/Illness Reasons



UNPAID LEAVE | Overall

About a third of Hawaii residents have had to take unpaid leave or exit the workforce.

Proportion of Hawaii Residents Who Took Unpaid Leave / Quit Their Job



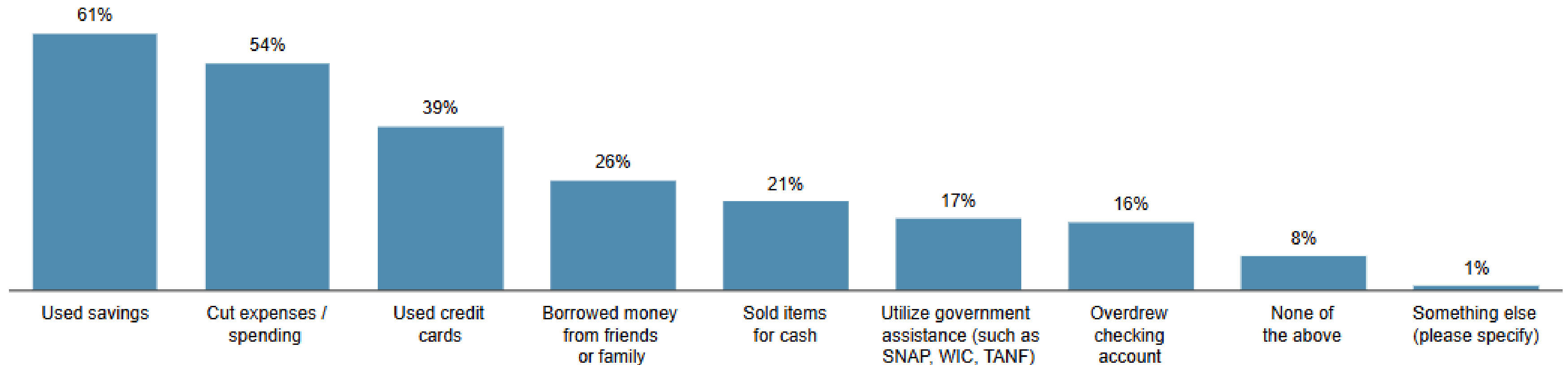
Q. Have you ever needed to take time off from work to care for a newborn or sick family member, or because of serious injury or illness?

Q. When you took time off from work, which of the following did you do?

UNPAID LEAVE & FINANCES | Overview

Those who take unpaid leave rely on the savings they have, cutting expenses, and credit cards.

Financial Actions Taken When Going On Unpaid Leave



Base: n=108

Q. When you took time off from work, which of the following did you do?

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

	TOTAL n=440
COUNTY	
Oahu	69%
Hawaii	14%
Maui	12%
Kauai	5%
GENDER	
Man	49%
Woman	51%
Some other way	<1%
AGE	
18-34	20%
35-49	25%
50-64	30%
65+	25%
MEAN	50.96
MEDIAN	52
PRIMARY ETHNICITY	
Caucasian	29%
Japanese	28%
Hawaiian	19%
Filipino	12%
Other	11%
Refused	1%

	TOTAL n=440
HOUSEHOLD INCOME	
<\$75,000	45%
\$75,000-\$150,000	29%
\$150,000+	19%
Don't Know/Refused	7%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	
Full-time	43%
Part-time	7%
Self-employed	8%
Retired	24%
Other (Not employed)	17%
EDUCATION	
College graduate	58%
No college degree	42%
PARENT	62%
CHILDREN IN HH	29%
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	
1 – 2 people	55%
3 – 4 people	32%
5+ people	13%
MEAN	2.78

	TOTAL n=440
BORN IN HAWAII	62%
YEARS IN HAWAII	
<5 years	8%
5 - 9 years	4%
10 – 19 years	10%
20+ years	22%
All your life	56%
REGISTERED TO VOTE	84%
VOTING FREQUENCY	
All of them	46%
Most of them	32%
Some of them	13%
Few of them	7%
None of them	2%

* Totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

‘OhanaFirst PaidLeaveHawaii.org

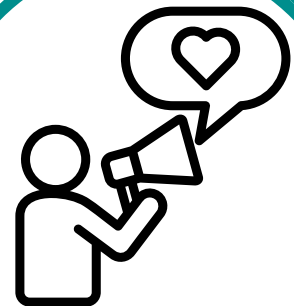
In 2024, ‘OhanaFirst Paid Leave Hawai‘i we....



- Grew a coalition of **27 organizations** and **32 individuals**



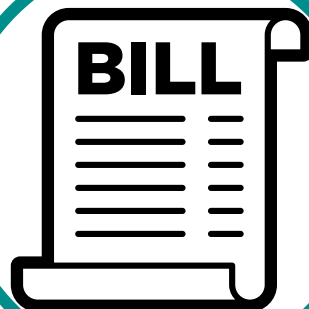
- Gained a support of **over 450 individuals statewide** who signed our petition



- Had advocates who **submitted 933 pieces of testimony in SUPPORT** throughout session



- Had **5 bills on the docket**



- Passed bills through **9 hearings**



- Successfully held the first **#OhanaFirst Paid Leave Rally** at the Captitol

‘OhanaFirst Paid Leave Rally Day

Feburary 22, 2024 @ the State Capitol

We gathered together and used our voices to tell legislators that ALL families in Hawai‘i deserved paid time off to care for themselves and their loved ones! We had signs available, but many brought their own. We rallied, talked to lawmakers, and shared stories of why we need paid family and medical leave.



‘Ohana First Paid Leave Events & Activities

Community Outreach Meetings

All meetings are held monthly, 6:00 PM to 6:30 PM HST via Zoom

- Wednesday, January 29, 2025
- Wednesday, February 26, 2025
- Wednesday, March 26, 2025
- Wednesday, April 30, 2025
- Wednesday, May 28, 2025

2025 Opening Day

- **Wednesday, January 15, 2025**
- **9:30 AM – 12:30 PM**
- We will attend the Opening Session in the Senate and the House and visit with legislators during Open House afterwards.

Working Families Rally and March

- **Friday, February 28, 2025**
- **Hawai‘i State Capitol**

‘OhanaFirst PaidLeaveHawaii.Org

Our website includes....

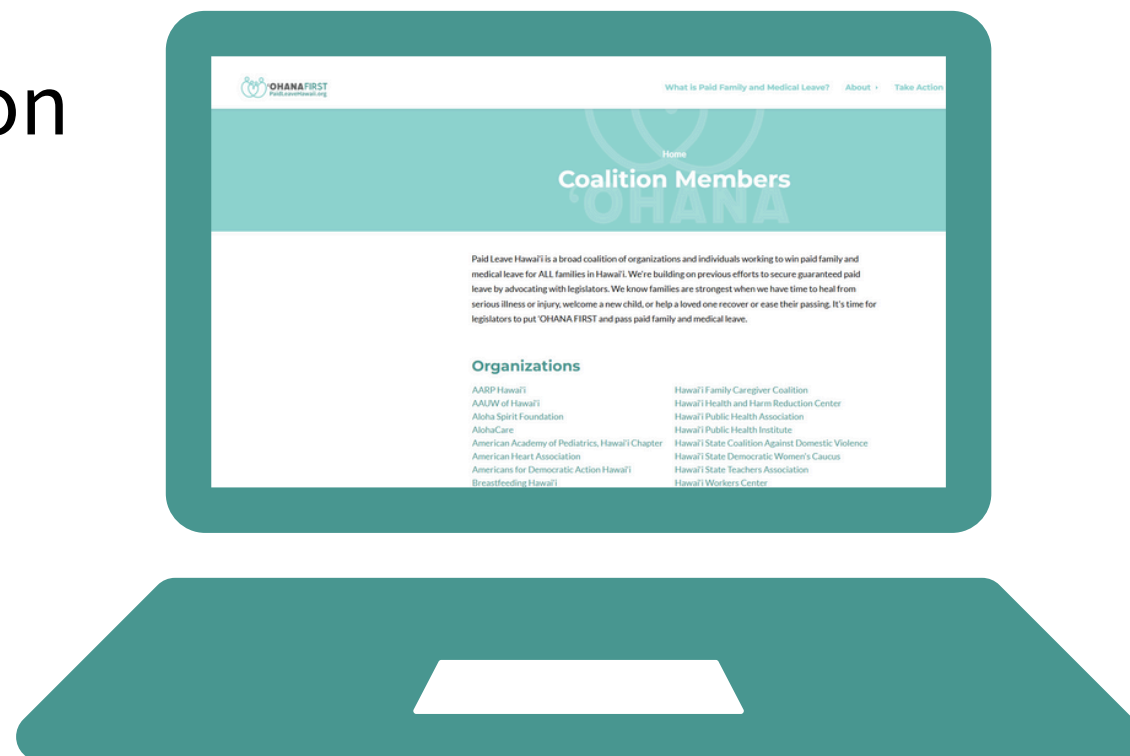
- Home Page



- PFML Information & Data



- List of Coalition Members



- PFML in the Media



‘OhanaFirst PaidLeaveHawaii.Org

Within our Website you can find Resources to print out, review and share. These resources include 4 policy briefs:

General Overview



Care Comes First
Paid Family and Medical Leave for ALL

Caring for ‘ohana is the core of what we do, who we are. Everyone deserves time to care for ourselves or loved ones without risking a job or paycheck. It's time for Paid Family and Medical Leave in Hawai‘i.

Why do we need Paid Family and Medical Leave?

- The US is the only wealthy country without national paid leave laws. 15 states and Washington DC now have Paid Family and Medical Leave. Hawai‘i workers have no legal right to Paid Family and Medical Leave.
- In Hawai‘i 154,806 unpaid family caregivers provide 104 million hours of care worth \$2.6 billion per year.
- Only 1 in 4 private sector workers have paid leave.
- Lower-income workers are least likely to have paid leave.

Family Medical Leave Act & Hawai‘i Family Leave Law

- Provides only unpaid leave
- Only for permanent large companies (100+ employees)

Hawai‘i Temporary Disability Insurance

- TDI cannot be used:

 - by nonbirthright parents to care for a new baby
 - to care for other family members


What could Paid Family and Medical Leave look like in Hawai‘i?

- All businesses and employees are covered
- Workers can return to their job after taking leave
- Lower-income workers receive a higher portion of their pay

Qualifying reasons for Paid Leave

- Caring for a new child (biological, adopted, or foster)
- Caring for a sick family member or handling own serious illness
- Handling military deployment or domestic violence

Benefits



The Benefits of Paid Family and Medical Leave

For employees

- Provides economic security during important life events
- Improves parent and child health and well-being
- Allows ‘ohana to stay in their homes and thrive in their communities

For employers

- Boosts employee productivity, which helps increase profits
- Boost morale
- Reduces turnover
- Benefits small businesses by helping level the playing field

For all of Hawai‘i

- Reduces reliance on public assistance programs
- Increases women's participation in the workforce
- Feasible, cost effective, and well-supported by 94% of Hawai‘i residents

How would Paid Family and Medical Leave work?

In Hawai‘i, a paid family and medical leave program would:

- Be a state-run benefit program, funded by small payroll deductions.
- Be available to both full-time and part-time workers.
- Provide up to 12 weeks for parental leave and up to 26 weeks for caregiving (our current TDI standard).
- Provide a higher portion of wages to lower-income workers.
- Ensure employees have a job to go back to after they take leave.

Caring for ‘ohana is our responsibility and privilege. Everyone benefits. Visit paidleavehawaii.org for more information.


Health



Paid Family and Medical Leave in Hawai‘i
Health Impacts: Potential benefits for all ages from kids through ‘ohana.

- Better Management of Chronic Disease**
 - Paid leave would allow the sick, like people in Hawai‘i who have at least one chronic disease to get treatment they need
- Improved Health for Mothers**
 - Reduces stress and improves health
 - Better physical and mental health
 - Lower risk of postpartum depression
 - Lower chance of being hospitalized after childbirth
- Healthier Kids**
 - More time with parents to care for children
 - Reduces infant mortality
 - Improves infant brain development
 - Spends more time and reduces hospital stays for children with illness
- Better ‘Ohana Care**
 - Hawai‘i currently has almost 100,000 people with a chronic disease each year for whom we currently have no services
 - Paid leave could help reduce caregiver stress and improve care
- Healthier Fathers**
 - Fathers who use paid family and medical leave:
 - Have few absences
 - Have a longer life expectancy
 - Are more likely to be healthy parents
- Increased Breastfeeding**
 - Maternity and medical leave increases breastfeeding
 - Increases exclusive breastfeeding rate of respiratory, ear infections, and gastrointestinal infections
- Improved Kūpuna Care**
 - Paid Family and Medical Leave improves caregivers' mental and emotional health
- Increased Health Equity**
 - Paid family and medical leave increases health equity among racial and ethnic groups

Business



Paid Family and Medical Leave
Great for Businesses!

What is Paid Family and Medical Leave?

Paid Family and Medical Leave is a proposed public program that would provide employees with paid time off to care for themselves or loved ones during important life events. It is designed to support small businesses, large and medium-sized businesses, and workers.

Why are we losing working time?

Without paid leave, workers are losing time from work when they need it. This is a huge loss for businesses and workers alike.

How does Paid Leave support businesses?

- Increased Productivity and Retention**
 - Workers who take paid leave are more productive when they return
 - Workers who take paid leave are more likely to stay with their employer
- Increased Recruitment and Retention**
 - Workers who take paid leave are more likely to stay with their employer
 - Workers who take paid leave are more likely to stay with their employer
- Helps Small Businesses Thrive**
 - Workers who take paid leave are more productive when they return
 - Workers who take paid leave are more likely to stay with their employer

How does Paid Family and Medical Leave work?

- State-run benefit program
- Funded by small payroll deductions
- Available to both full-time and part-time workers
- Provides a higher portion of wages to lower-income workers
- Ensures employees have a job to go back to after they take leave

Visit paidleavehawaii.org for more information.

Take Action!

Sign up for the following using the QR code to visit our **Take Action** subpages @paidleavehawaii.org

- **Email Updates & Action Alerts**
- **Join the Coalition**
- **Host a #TimetoCare Screening**
- **Sign the Petition!**
- **Business Support**
- **Follow us on Socials!**

