

Good morning. My name is Patrick Williams. My wife, Caitlin, and I are eagerly awaiting the birth of our first child.

I met Caitlin in San Francisco, where I had my first real job after earning a degree in Computer Science from the University of Washington. Caitlin was attending Berkeley at the time, and she went on to get her Masters from Cal State.

We both pride ourselves in working hard, and making the most of our opportunities.

Two years ago, Caitlin and I moved from California to my home town of Seattle. We bought our first house, across the street from my parents. We've endured the endless "Everyone Loves Raymond" references, knowing that it was going to be a perfect place to raise kids.

When I was in San Francisco, coworkers regularly took time off to take care of their spouses and newborns, using California's paid family leave program. It made all the sense in the world. They weren't going to be able to focus at work knowing that their loved ones needed them.

But now that we need family leave, we don't have it.

Now this is no sob story. We're going to be fine.

But given that both my brother and I were 10+ lbs babies, I suspect Caitlin's going to need some recovery time. I worked through the holidays, and I've stopped taking days off sick, because how can I justify taking off time now, knowing that it means a day I don't get to spend with my newborn later?

My question to you is this: What could I have done differently to deserve more time with my newborn?

Caitlin and I prioritized education, worked hard, bought a house, and got married. I've been so fortunate, and done everything "right", and even I won't get much time with my baby and caring for my wife if she has a rough delivery

I can't pretend to understand the political forces at work, preventing the benefits that everyone in California takes for granted from being available in the state I love so much.

I'm hoping you can help. Because not everyone gets this lucky, and we're still scared.

Please, pass family and medical leave insurance now, so it's available when we have our second child – and for all the other families in the state who are even more terrified about how they'll cope than we are.

Thank you.