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**September 2, 2020**

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## **Women's Caucus Leaders Issue Statement Regarding Prioritizing Needs of Working Moms in Legislature**

SACRAMENTO – Senator Connie M. Leyva (D-Chino), Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus and Assemblymember Monique Limón (D-Santa Barbara), Vice Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus issued the following statement after Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (D-Oakland) was recently denied the opportunity to use proxy voting during maternity leave;

“As Women's Caucus leaders, we are deeply troubled that a member of our Caucus was required to travel to Sacramento with her newborn baby—in the midst of maternity leave during a global pandemic—so that she could vote on end-of-session measures.

As elected officials, it is our duty to speak up and try to correct these wrongs. Let us be clear, it is not the sole responsibility of women to prioritize the health and safety of women in the workplace. While the Assembly was voting to expand paid family leave, one of our caucus members was experiencing the challenge working parents face in front of our very own eyes. This event was a difficult reminder of what women experience every day in all work environments—and the Legislature is clearly no exception.

We must do better.

The Legislative Women's Caucus is committed to look within the houses and work with leadership from both the Senate and Assembly to improve our internal policies for women in the Legislature. Over the coming weeks and months our caucus will be reflecting on our policies and making recommendations to leadership in both houses.

We recognize the privilege of holding higher office. With that privilege, we must continue our work to increase protections for working mothers and also acknowledge that some groups of women—particularly working class women of color who are most impacted by the existing wage gap—oftentimes face even more difficult barriers.

In order to achieve gender equity for all women, we must ensure that more diverse women are elected to office and have a seat at the table.

The caucus is using this troubling situation to champion stronger policies for all women, children and families in California—including those within the Capitol community.”