



Job Tenure and Firm Size Provisions Exclude Many Young Parents from Family and Medical Leave

BY HEATHER BOUSHEY AND JOHN SCHMITT*

Two provisions in the Family and Medical Leave Act exclude a significant share of those who need unpaid family and medical leave. First, the requirement of a full year with the current employer to make use of leave excludes many first-time parents from coverage. Second, the requirement of having at least 50 employees also sharply reduces those eligible for leave. Both factors may lead to “job-lock”.

The attached tables shows job tenure (in years) and firm size for workers by gender, race, age, presence of a young child (aged 2 or under). Due to the limitations of the data, the firm size is the total number of workers at all establishments, not just locations within 50 miles of where an employee works.

Some key findings are:

- Among workers aged 18 to 25, 43.3 percent of women and 31.2 percent of men with a child at home have held their job for less than a year ([Table 1](#)).
- Among workers aged 18 to 25, 38.5 percent of whites, 48.0 percent of blacks, and 31.5 percent of Hispanics with a child at home have held their job for less than a year ([Table 2](#)).
- Over a third of workers are employed in smaller firms. The Bureau of Labor Statistics does not provide data for firms with 50 people or less, but given the trends shown in [Tables 3](#) and [4](#), there is strong evidence that this provision has a large effect on the eligible population.

Center for Economic and
Policy Research
1611 Connecticut Ave, NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20009
tel: 202-293-5380
fax: 202-588-1356
www.cepr.net

(Tables to follow)

*Heather Boushey and John Schmitt are Senior Economists at the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, DC.

TABLE 1
Share of Workers with Years of Job Tenure by Gender, Age of Worker, and Presence of Child under Age 2 in the Home

Job tenure	Aged 18 to 25		Aged 26 to 35		Aged 36 to 45		Aged 46 to 55		Aged 56 to 64	
	Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Women										
0 <1	40.4	43.3	23.7	21.2	15.6	14.9	10.2	7.3	7.3	75.5
1 <2	17.5	17.1	13.5	12.7	9.1	9.1	6.5	16.4	4.8	0.0
2 <5	32.0	29.5	29.1	27.6	22.6	22.1	17.8	12.0	15.6	0.0
5 <10	10.2	9.8	25.3	31.0	26.4	27.9	22.5	22.3	20.4	0.0
10 <20	0.0	0.3	8.4	7.5	21.5	23.4	25.7	42.1	26.0	24.6
20+	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	4.8	2.5	17.4	0.0	26.0	0.0
Men										
0 <1	34.7	31.2	20.6	19.2	12.1	13.2	9.2	11.2	7.7	0.0
1 <2	25.0	19.1	11.6	11.4	7.4	8.0	5.5	15.5	4.6	0.0
2 <5	29.9	32.9	27.4	27.3	18.3	25.3	14.8	13.8	14.7	0.0
5 <10	9.8	16.3	28.4	32.3	25.0	26.7	19.1	23.6	17.0	65.0
10 <20	0.6	0.5	12.0	9.8	28.5	23.4	25.3	23.0	21.9	5.5
20+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.7	3.4	26.2	12.9	34.1	29.5

Source: CEPR analysis of the Current Population Survey Tenure Supplement, survey year 2006.

TABLE 2
Share of Workers with Years of Job Tenure by Race/ Ethnicity, Age of Worker, and Presence of Child under Age 2 in the Home

Job tenure	Aged 18 to 25		Aged 26 to 35		Aged 36 to 45		Aged 46 to 55		Aged 56 to 64	
	Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
White										
0 <1	36.4	38.5	20.5	17.7	13.4	11.5	9.2	10.2	7.5	0.0
1 <2	20.0	15.7	12.4	12.0	7.5	7.7	5.7	18.8	4.7	0.0
2 <5	31.6	32.8	27.3	25.9	19.1	21.7	15.0	11.1	14.1	0.0
5 <10	11.9	12.3	27.9	34.3	25.4	27.6	20.3	24.2	18.0	24.8
10 <20	0.2	0.7	11.9	10.1	26.5	27.9	26.2	26.4	23.8	36.9
20+	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	8.1	3.5	23.7	9.5	31.9	38.2
Black										
0 <1	42.9	48.0	25.6	28.3	13.7	18.6	12.1	21.8	7.6	0.0
1 <2	22.7	20.1	13.2	12.7	9.9	10.2	5.7	12.9	6.7	0.0
2 <5	29.5	25.8	29.1	25.5	21.9	27.4	17.2	27.1	15.0	0.0
5 <10	4.9	6.2	26.2	26.3	28.3	19.7	20.0	1.7	19.5	0.0
10 <20	0.0	0.0	5.9	7.2	22.3	21.0	23.5	30.5	21.2	0.0
20+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8	3.2	21.6	6.2	30.0	0.0
Hispanic										
0 <1	37.8	31.5	24.7	22.3	16.3	20.2	10.9	5.6	9.1	0.0
1 <2	22.7	21.4	12.0	10.9	10.4	11.9	8.1	5.5	4.0	0.0
2 <5	31.2	30.2	30.6	34.1	25.8	31.9	23.4	10.9	22.6	0.0
5 <10	7.7	16.9	24.0	26.0	24.7	23.0	23.8	35.9	21.7	100.0
10 <20	0.6	0.0	8.8	6.7	19.7	10.8	22.6	23.0	23.4	0.0
20+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	2.2	11.2	19.2	19.3	0.0

Source: CEPR analysis of the Current Population Survey Tenure Supplement, survey year 2006.

TABLE 3
Firm Size by Gender, Age of Worker, and Presence of Child under Age 2 in the Home

Firm size	Aged 18 to 25		Aged 26 to 35		Aged 36 to 45		Aged 46 to 55		Aged 56 to 64	
	Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Women										
<10	14.8	15.6	16.3	17.6	18.7	21.0	19.5	9.7	20.8	23.3
10-24	12.7	13.3	10.3	10.3	8.5	7.2	7.4	6.7	7.6	8.2
0-24	27.5	28.9	26.6	27.9	27.2	28.1	26.8	16.4	28.4	31.5
25-99	13.7	12.8	12.5	12.5	12.6	11.3	12.2	14.8	11.3	7.3
100-499	11.0	10.6	12.6	13.5	13.7	14.1	13.5	19.2	13.3	15.8
500-999	5.8	4.1	5.8	5.8	6.5	6.3	6.4	9.0	6.3	2.8
1,000+	42.0	43.7	42.6	40.4	40.0	40.2	41.0	40.7	40.7	42.6
Men										
<10	18.6	19.7	20.5	18.8	22.7	22.0	24.2	23.3	27.2	20.0
10-24	13.1	11.6	11.0	9.8	9.6	9.4	9.2	11.8	8.1	13.7
0-24	31.8	31.3	31.5	28.6	32.3	31.4	33.3	35.0	35.3	33.7
25-99	15.2	16.2	14.8	15.3	13.8	12.4	11.9	15.6	11.1	16.6
100-499	11.1	13.2	14.0	13.8	13.1	12.4	13.0	16.5	13.0	15.9
500-999	4.2	5.4	4.9	5.2	5.3	4.2	5.2	3.5	4.5	6.9
1,000+	37.7	34.0	34.8	37.3	35.5	39.7	36.6	29.5	36.1	27.0

Source: CEPR analysis of the Annual Social and Economic Supplement, survey year 2006.

TABLE 4
Share of Workers in Firm Size by Race/ Ethnicity, Age of Worker, and Presence of Child under Age 2 in the Home

Firm size	Aged 18 to 25		Aged 26 to 35		Aged 36 to 45		Aged 46 to 55		Aged 56 to 64	
	Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2		Has child under age 2	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
White										
<10	17.3	16.8	18.8	18.0	21.4	22.2	22.8	19.0	24.8	24.9
10-24	13.0	13.4	10.5	9.2	9.2	8.8	8.2	10.1	7.6	5.0
<i>0-24</i>	<i>30.2</i>	<i>30.2</i>	<i>29.3</i>	<i>27.3</i>	<i>30.5</i>	<i>31.0</i>	<i>31.0</i>	<i>29.1</i>	<i>32.4</i>	<i>29.9</i>
25-99	14.8	12.7	13.6	13.1	13.1	11.2	12.4	14.3	11.3	17.8
100-499	11.1	12.3	13.7	14.5	13.5	13.0	13.2	19.7	13.1	16.0
500-999	4.9	4.7	5.2	5.7	6.0	4.7	5.8	3.6	5.4	5.5
1,000+	39.1	40.2	38.3	39.5	36.9	40.2	37.7	33.3	37.9	30.9
Black										
<10	10.4	11.7	10.4	10.8	12.4	15.5	14.7	18.2	16.4	19.3
10-24	8.9	7.7	8.1	8.1	5.7	4.3	5.1	14.8	7.2	13.4
<i>0-24</i>	<i>19.3</i>	<i>19.4</i>	<i>18.4</i>	<i>18.9</i>	<i>18.2</i>	<i>19.7</i>	<i>19.8</i>	<i>33.0</i>	<i>23.6</i>	<i>32.7</i>
25-99	13.7	10.9	14.4	13.6	12.6	10.1	10.2	11.5	11.2	0.0
100-499	10.9	11.5	14.1	10.8	13.4	17.1	13.9	14.8	9.6	19.5
500-999	6.4	2.6	6.5	7.1	6.7	6.1	6.6	6.1	6.1	0.0
1,000+	49.8	55.7	46.6	49.6	49.1	47.0	49.5	34.6	49.5	47.8
Hispanic										
<10	20.1	20.8	24.2	22.7	23.7	24.8	21.2	21.4	24.5	12.9
10-24	16.8	13.6	13.6	15.0	11.7	12.0	11.9	8.8	10.8	25.7
<i>0-24</i>	<i>37.0</i>	<i>34.5</i>	<i>37.8</i>	<i>37.7</i>	<i>35.4</i>	<i>36.8</i>	<i>33.2</i>	<i>30.2</i>	<i>35.3</i>	<i>38.6</i>
25-99	15.0	18.1	15.4	17.4	15.6	16.4	13.2	18.6	12.8	10.5
100-499	11.0	10.8	11.6	12.3	13.5	11.4	13.2	14.4	17.9	5.7
500-999	4.0	4.8	4.9	3.5	5.0	4.4	5.0	7.0	5.0	8.7
1,000+	33.1	31.8	30.3	29.1	30.6	31.1	35.5	29.8	29.0	36.5

Source: CEPR analysis of the Annual Social and Economic Supplement, survey year 2006.