



Testimony of Barbara Wankoff
National Director of Workplace Solutions

June 9, 2008

Committee on Education and Labor
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections



Good Afternoon. My name is Barbara Wankoff and I am KPMG's National Director of Workplace Solutions. I am responsible for the firm's work life benefits and programs supporting our goal to be an employer of choice.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you today.

KPMG is a tax, audit and advisory firm with more than 21,000 employees and 1800 partners in the United States and we believe that helping employees manage their responsibilities both inside and outside of work is beneficial to everyone, and to our bottom line. Our policies and programs support this belief.

Our employees tend to be ambitious and career oriented. They want to develop professionally and build a career, but they also have lives as parents, sons or daughters, and spouses -- so at KPMG we are promoting a culture of flexibility.

Let me explain what that means.

First, retaining our employees is very important to the success of our firm. Keeping our best people helps us to maintain client continuity and allow for knowledge sharing. So we've added some very innovative programs to improve our retention rates.

We know there are times in employees' lives when it becomes necessary to take time off to tend to personal concerns and major life events and we've got programs to address these times.

For example, we recognize the critical need for new mothers to bond with their children, so we allow them to take up to 26 weeks of leave, going beyond FMLA, while guaranteeing that their job will be waiting for them when they return. And this applies to births, adoptions or foster care placement. And by paying women 100% of their regular salary for up to eight weeks, as well as additional weeks at two-thirds pay, we are making it easier for women to take the time off that they want.

We also believe that fathers should have time to bond with their newborns and be there to support their spouses and partners. New fathers receive 2 weeks of paid parental leave anytime within the first year after the birth, adoption or placement of a child in the home. This program has been in place since 2002 and an astounding 82% of fathers have taken advantage of it.

We like to cite that statistic because we're proud of the fact that we've created an environment at KPMG that encourages people to use these benefits when they need them.

For those employees who are adopting a child, in addition to the two weeks paid leave, an additional six weeks of paid leave is available if your spouse or partner is not staying home with the child on a temporary or long-term basis. This assures that at least one parent will be home with the newly adopted child for the first six weeks after placement.



We pay attention to not only the time off but also to our new moms' return to work. To ease the transition for new mothers we provide privacy rooms for breastfeeding and allow them to phase in their return from leave. For example, some new parents return to work 3 days per week initially and gradually ramp back up to full-time responsibilities and hours.

Another program we're particularly proud of is called shared leave.

This allows an employee caring for a seriously ill relative, and who has exhausted their personal time, to request an additional 12 weeks paid time off that is donated by fellow employees. We developed shared leave after listening to our people tell us that what they wanted most when faced with a serious illness in their family was to spend time with their loved one.

So while we can't provide a miracle cure, we can provide them with additional time-off. And it's amazing how willing co-workers are to donate some of their time to a colleague – fully 100% of these shared leave requests are met by the generosity of their fellow employees. This program is a Godsend for those facing difficult times. In 2007 80 people used 13,957 donated hours.

KPMG also provides unpaid leaves for up to 24 months to pursue various personal interests including additional education or civic duties. These programs enable employees to stay more closely connected to the firm and to return more easily than if they terminated their employment.

KPMG supports our military personnel and provides paid time off for one week of annual reserve training and grants additional time as necessary. In an effort to support our full-time employees who are called to active duty, the firm provides differential pay for the length of the service activation up to six months.

Our generous paid time off policy allows employees to supplement leaves with paid personal time extending their paid time away from the job and yet still having time to enjoy vacations throughout the year.

Our culture of flexibility also allows our people to participate in their family activities while staying fully employed. We do this by offering flextime, compressed work week, telecommuting, job sharing, reduced workloads, and part time work.

When parents or elderly relatives get sick, especially in a distant city, employees may feel the need to take a personal leave of absence to be sure their relative is getting the appropriate care. While that is an option, as an alternative, KPMG offers eldercare services that address these needs and allows our employees to return to work knowing their relative is being well cared for.

Our commitment to helping working families has not gone unnoticed. KPMG has earned a spot on Working Mother Media's List of 100 Best Companies for Working Mothers eleven times and in the top ten last year; we have made the Companies that Care Honor Roll five times, and for the past two years, Fortune Magazine named KPMG one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For.



Collectively, the programs I've described meet the needs of both our employees and our business. They demonstrate that we care about our employees and are committed to helping them balance work and life. These programs help us attract and retain key talent, which is critical to meeting clients' needs and to the overall success of the firm. At KPMG, retention rates and morale are up.

Thank you for this opportunity to share KPMG's views with you today.