Who Gives Parents a Break?

Guaranteed Leave for Mothers, 2006 At least At least At least At least Under Any leave No paid 52 weeks 14 weeks 52 weeks and 14 weeks and 14 weeks with less leave than half and and at least half at least half and varying No data full wages full wages wages wages wages wages In Ota, Japan, male municipal workers who RUSSIA become fathers must take 40 days of paid leave. AUSTRIA SLOVENIA JAPAN UNITED STATES ALBANIA Slovenia gives at least ARMENIA SOUTH KOREA 52 weeks of leave and pays INDIA full wages. UZBEKISTAN LIBERIA PAPUA NEW GUINEA Employees of India's central government may The governments take 135 days of of Australia, maternity leave Liberia, Papua at full pay. New Guinea, Swaziland, and the United States AUSTRALIA SWAZILAND provide some of the world's weakest leave benefits.

American moms-to-be might consider a move to Slovenia. While U.S. law guarantees a mere 12 weeks of unpaid leave under certain conditions, the least of any industrialized nation, the relatively poor central European country offers far more substantial benefits. Many nations give new mothers at least 14 weeks of leave from work around the time their child is born. Some 66 countries let dads take time off, too. The consensus is that bonding time with parents is good for a newborn's health and development. By that measure, places like Cuba, Uzbekistan, and South Korea earn high marks. And the U.S., says Jody Heymann, a social policy expert at McGill University, could definitely do better. —Neil Shea



In the U.S., Mark Vann III's lucky dad got a paid week off.