

Netflix facing protests over DVD-less baby benefit policy

August 21 2015, by Michael Liedtke

Netflix is getting jeered for excluding the employees in its DVD-by-mail service from a recently introduced benefit that gives up to a year of paid leave to most of its workers after the birth or adoption of a baby.

At least three online petitions posted by activist groups are urging Netflix to extend the baby benefit beyond the roughly 2,000 [workers](#) in the Internet video service that generates most of its revenue.

Netflix has about 450 temporary, part- and full-time employees in its steadily shrinking but still profitable DVD division.

The protesting groups contend Netflix is unfairly favoring the mostly high-paid computer programmers and other technology specialists working in its Internet video service over the lower-paid employees who sort through discs and stuff envelopes in the distribution centers that receive and send DVDs.

Many of the DVD workers are paid by the hour and make a fraction of the six-figure salaries doled out to many of the Internet video service employees. Netflix pay varies widely, ranging from \$15 per hour for customer-service representatives to more than \$200,000 annually for software engineers, according to information shared by company workers on employer review website Glassdoor.com.

"Netflix is leaving workers who could benefit the most from a generous paid leave policy behind and that is offensive," said Nita Chaudhary, co-

founder of UltraViolet, a women's rights group.

Netflix says its DVD employees get bigger paychecks and better benefits than people in comparable jobs. "We are regularly reviewing policies across our business to ensure they are competitive and help us attract and keep the best [employees](#)," the Los Gatos, California, company said in a statement.

Besides UltraViolet, the two other groups pressuring Netflix about the limits on its parental leave policy are: Coworker.org, which fights for workers' rights; and Democracy for America, a political organization founded by Howard Dean, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee and a one-time candidate for president.

Democracy for America sent emails Thursday urging its members to challenge Netflix for discriminating against its DVD workers.

"A worker's ability to care for their family should not be dependent on what department they work in," wrote Mia Moore, Democracy for America's chief of staff.

When it announced its new baby benefit earlier this month to widespread acclaim, Netflix initially said the policy would apply to all its full-time workers. It wasn't until a few days later that Netflix revealed that DVD workers would not be eligible, after all.

Although it once was the Netflix's focal point, the DVD rental service has become a company afterthought as more households have embraced the concept of streaming video over high-speed Internet connections. Netflix now has more than 65 million worldwide subscribers to its Internet [video service](#) compared to 5.3 million DVD customers—less than half the number that it had three-and-half-years ago.

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