

Paid leave makes Delaware families stronger

No one should have to choose between their job and their family

Fact Sheet | February 2021

Paid leave is critical to building stronger Delaware families and a stronger Delaware economy. Every day Delawareans are facing impossible choices between caring for their families or missing out on a paycheck, resulting in thousands of dollars in lost wages and increased pressures on working families. At the same time, Delaware is the last state with a longstanding Democratic Trifecta that has not passed a statewide paid family and medical leave program to alleviate those pressures and unlock economic potential for those families.

A statewide paid family and medical leave program would keep us competitive with our neighbors, attracting new families to the state and building a strong foundation for working families. It would provide Delawareans with 12 weeks of paid leave to address a serious health condition, care for a family member with a serious health condition, bond with a new child, or address the impact of a family member's military deployment or matters relating to domestic violence.

Everyone will face a major medical event or emergency at one point in their life. But too many cannot afford to take leave when they need it.

- In Delaware, almost 60 percent of working people don't even have access to unpaid leave.ⁱ
- As a result, thousands of Delawareans are forced to leave the workforce or go without pay when they face a major medical event – like welcoming a new child to their family, caring for a family member with a serious illness or facing a health or safety emergency themselves.

The pandemic has taken a toll on working families, highlighting the need for policies that help Delawareans keep their jobs.

- Women have experienced a disproportionate level of job loss during the pandemic,ⁱⁱ which could result in \$64.5 billion in lost wages nationwide.ⁱⁱⁱ

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- Women are the breadwinners in many Delaware households, including 82 percent of Black mothers, 48 percent of white mothers and 56 percent of Latina mothers.^{iv} For communities hit hard by COVID-19, it has often meant taking unpaid time away from work to care for a loved one, resulting in thousands of dollars in lost wages, hurting our economy.

Paid Family & Medical Leave would give Delawareans the time they need to care for themselves and their loved ones.

A statewide paid family & medical leave insurance program would provide 12 weeks of paid leave for a covered purpose in a 12 month period, including:

- To address a worker's own serious health condition
- To care for a family member with a serious health condition
- To bond with a new child (including newborn, foster and adopted children)
- To address the impact of a family member's military deployment
- To handle legal, medical and practical matters relating to domestic violence

Paid Family & Medical Leave is a public health priority as Delaware families face increased medical care needs.

- Paid family leave is part of a broader public health equity strategy. Studies have shown that paid parental leave can reduce infant mortality.^v
- In the next 15 years, the share of Delaware's population age 65 and older will grow by nearly 40 percent.^{vi} Delaware caregivers will need time to care for their family members as they age.

Paid Leave reduces costs for businesses and levels the playing field for small businesses to attract the best talent.

- Every year, thousands of good employees leave the workforce to welcome a new child or care for an ill family member. For many small businesses, the cost of replacing those employees is astronomical.
- Studies show that paid family leave policies increased the likelihood that an employee will return to the same employer after taking leave.^{vii}

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- For smaller businesses that cannot afford to offer paid leave policies, a statewide paid family & medical leave program enables them to provide the same benefit as their larger competitors, alleviating the burden and helping them attract the best talent.

Other states that have enacted Paid Family & Medical Leave have seen the benefits.

- A study in New Jersey found that “workers subject to paid leave protections had higher morale and productivity, and businesses that offer paid leave experienced significantly lower turnover.”^{viii}
- In California, a study found that among small businesses, 91 percent said “the law had ‘positive effect’ or ‘no noticeable effect’ on profitability and performance” and 99 percent said the law had “a ‘positive effect’ or ‘no noticeable effect’ on morale.”
- A poll commissioned by Small Business Majority found that a “majority of small business owners and operators support paid family leave insurance pools,” with 70 percent supporting a nationwide program.^{ix}

The time is now. [Join our movement](#) to make Paid Family & Medical Leave a reality for every Delawarean.

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References

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