

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5829

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Commerce, Labor & Sports, February 16, 2017

Title: An act relating to paid family leave.

Brief Description: Addressing paid family leave.

Sponsors: Senators Fain, Keiser, Conway and Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce, Labor & Sports: 2/16/17 [DP-WM, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Declares that it is in the public's interest to provide reasonable paid family leave.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, LABOR & SPORTS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Baumgartner, Chair; Keiser, Ranking Minority Member; Conway, Hasegawa, King, Rossi, Saldaña and Wilson.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Braun, Vice Chair.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: Unpaid Family and Medical Leave. *Federal Law.* Federal and state laws grant certain employees the right to unpaid family and medical leave. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the birth or placement of an adopted or foster child, or the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member. Eligible employees may also take leave because of a qualifying exigency arising out of active military duty or impending active duty status. Generally, the FMLA applies to employees who work for a private employer with 50 or more employees or for a public employer, and meet employment duration requirements.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

State Law. The state Family Leave Act (FLA) is very similar to the FMLA but does not include military exigency leave. Under the FLA, a "serious health condition" is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care at specified facilities, or continuing treatment by a health care provider. A number of types of incapacity qualify as "continuing treatment by a health care provider," including an incapacity lasting more than three consecutive days that involves treatment by a health care provider.

The state Military Family Leave Act allows certain employees to take 15 days of job-protected leave when the employee's spouse is notified of an impending call to active duty or when the spouse is on leave from active duty.

Paid Leave. I-1433. Under Initiative 1433, passed by the voters in 2016, employees will be eligible for paid sick leave beginning on January 1, 2018. Paid sick leave accrues at the rate of one hour of leave for every 40 hours worked. Paid sick leave may be used for the employee's or a family member's injury, illness, or health condition, or need for preventative care and other specified situations. Employers must pay employees using paid sick leave at their regular rate of pay or the minimum wage, whichever is greater.

Family Leave Insurance Program. A framework for a state family leave insurance program was enacted in 2007. Under 2013 legislation, benefits are to begin when the Legislature has specifically appropriated funding and enacted an implementation date.

The framework provides for benefits of \$250 per week for up to five weeks for individuals on leave for the birth or the placement of a child for adoption. To receive benefits, an individual must have worked 680 hours during either the first four of the last five calendar quarters or the last four calendar quarters completed (qualifying year). Most employers are covered. An employer not mandatorily covered or a self-employed person may elect coverage. Paid family leave must be taken concurrently with leave under the FMLA or the FLA.

Job protection applies to individuals who have worked at least 12 months for an employer with more than 25 employees and for at least 1250 hours over the previous 12 months with the employer.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature declares it to be in the public interest to provide reasonable paid family leave for medical reasons, for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care with the employee, for the care of a family member who has a serious health condition, and for a qualifying exigency under the federal family and medical leave act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: No public hearing was held.

Persons Testifying: N/A

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: N/A