



Vermont Legislative Research Shop

Paid Family Leave

According to a study by the bipartisan Family Leave Commission—a commission established by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—63.9% of employees who were eligible for family leave since the FMLA was passed in 1993 could not afford to take it. An estimated 24 million workers have taken unpaid leave (Department of Labor, ND).

The United States is one of the few nations in the western world without paid parental leave (See Appendix A). Dale Russakoff of the cited Germany as an example, where women who take leave from work for childbirth receive full paychecks for 14 weeks, and are paid some compensation until a child is 2 years old (Russakoff, 2000). Last June, at the orders of President Clinton, the Department of Labor issued regulations that enabled states to provide unemployment checks for family leave "on a voluntary, experimental basis" (Barko, 2000). So far, supporters have introduced bills that would grant some form of paid family leave in legislatures in 18 states during the year 2000; no state has enacted paid family leave at this point.

Pending Legislation

In Indiana, a bill to provide 12 weeks of unemployment insurance passed the House but not the Senate. In Massachusetts, an unemployment insurance proposal passed as an amendment to the states supplemental budget, but Governor Paul Cellucci vetoed it. In New Jersey two bills were introduced in the legislature, one to provide unemployment benefits, and one to extend disability pay

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| Greece | 16 weeks |
| Ireland | 14 weeks |
| Italy | 5 months |
| Liechtenstein | 12 weeks |
| Luxembourg | 16 weeks |
| Netherlands | 16 weeks |
| Norway | 1 year |

