

LWVNY Supports Paid Family Leave

LWVNY supports Paid Family Leave under the LWVUS position on Meeting Basic Human Needs. LWVUS used this position to lobby successfully in support of The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, which guaranteed access to unpaid leave for one's own illness, to care for a seriously ill family member or to bond with a new child. This LWVUS position also states that people who are unable to work have the right to an income sufficient to meet their basic needs.

The Paid Family Leave Act [A. 3870 (Nolan) / S. 3004 (Addabbo)] will provide workers in New York State with up to 12 weeks of paid leave a year to bond with a new child, care for a seriously ill family member, or address certain issues arising from a family member's military service. It will operate through the Temporary Disability Insurance system and does not require the expenditure of state funds.

About the Bill:

Paid Family Leave Insurance (PFLI) will become a part of the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) program that has been in place in New York since 1950. Therefore, implementation of the PFLI program will create no administrative changes for businesses, allowing businesses to use whatever mechanism they currently use to comply with TDI requirements.

Workers will receive two-thirds of their average weekly wage while taking PFLI, up to a maximum benefit level. This maximum benefit level will be raised in steps over four years until it equals 50% of the statewide average weekly wage. The proposed bill will also modernize New York's TDI system by raising the TDI benefit level for the first time in 25 years.

Employers' payroll costs will not be affected by PFLI. The weekly PFLI benefit will be financed solely through employee payroll deductions of up to 45 cents a week in the first year. In subsequent years, New York's Superintendent of Financial Services will determine the amount of employee contributions based on the cost per worker of providing PFLI through the state insurance fund. The cost of raising the TDI benefit level will continue to be shared, as in the current TDI program, by both workers and employers.

Background:

"The U.S. is the only advanced country on Earth that doesn't guarantee paid sick leave or paid maternity leave to our workers," (President Obama said in his State of the Union speech).

Doctors have found that policies allowing family members to be with their loved ones through an illness are good for the health of their patients.

Economists know PFLI keeps women in the workforce and increases their earning potential – without hurting businesses small or large.

Voters on both sides of the aisle overwhelmingly agree on the issue, and that government has a responsibility to provide such policies that reflect the realities of modern families. Statewide, 7

out of 10 voters support modernizing our Temporary Disability Insurance system to provide paid family leave, according to a Marist poll.

In NYC, support has grown to 84%, with the latest Community Service Society/Lake Survey finding that 2 out of 3 New Yorkers strongly support paid family leave.

Unlike other states working hard to find money to create a new paid family leave program, New York already has a Temporary Disability Insurance program that can easily be expanded to include paid family leave.

Paid family leave would ensure that no New Yorker has to choose between the health and economic stability of her family. It would mean that the major life moments we all share – the arrival of a new child, or a close relative needing care – do not have to mean debt or bankruptcy.