

CLOSING THE JOB PROTECTION LOOPHOLE IN PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

PRESENTED BY THE WASHINGTON WORK AND FAMILY COALITION



Almost everyone will need to take extended leave from work at some point in their life to care for a new child, help a family member who is sick, or recover from their own serious illness. Washington's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Act provides up to 18 weeks of paid time off during life's most important moments.

Since the program commenced, it has provided benefits to hundreds of thousands of workers. However, under current state law, nearly half of Washington workers who are eligible for paid leave are not guaranteed their job back if they do.

Accessing paid leave could not only result in being fired but also in losing access to health care at a time when they or their family are seriously ill.

LACK OF JOB PROTECTION IN CURRENT LAW

50%

Nearly **50%** of Washington workers who have worked enough hours to apply for PFML **do not qualify for job protection.**

16%

In fact, only **16%** of the lowest wage earners **qualify** for job protection.

Women, workers of color, and workers without postsecondary degrees are less likely to qualify for job-protected leave.

The current law only provides job protection to a small group of Washingtonians with limited job protection requirements, including working at an employer with at least 50 employees in the state of Washington, having worked with that employer for at least a year, and having worked 1,250 hours in the past year.

Join the Washington Work and Family Coalition to support this legislation.

SUPPORT IS GROWING!



The proposed legislation would change this by including workers who:

- Worked with their employer for at least 90 calendar days in alignment with when employees start accruing paid sick leaves.

And have already met both existing requirements:

- Worked at least 820 hours in the past year,
- Experienced a qualifying event that was certified by a healthcare provider.

THE PROPOSED BILL WILL RUN WASHINGTON'S PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE JOB PROTECTION CONCURRENTLY WITH FEDERAL FMLA UNDER THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- 1 The employee took unpaid leave for time that was eligible for PFML benefits;
- 2 The employer notified the employee in a language they can understand within five calendar days that PFML covers their unpaid leave, and they can apply to receive paid leave benefits;
- 3 The employer notified the employee in a language they can understand that this unpaid leave is being counted as FMLA leave and may reduce their job protection entitlement for PFML over the next year.

Additional program improvements proposed in this legislation would require four hours of missed work to qualify for PFML, reduced from eight hours. This improvement reflects shorter shifts for part-time and service workers and allows workers to take leave in four-hour increments instead of an eight-hour standard.

Members of the Washington Work and Family Coalition (not a complete list):



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