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Paid Family Leave Bill Introduced by D.C. City Council

BY KARA M. MACIEL & DANIEL C. DEACON

By: [Kara M. Maciel](#) and Daniel Deacon

 The D.C. City Council is introducing a [bill](#) that will give almost every employee in the nation's capital 16 weeks of paid family leave to bond with an infant or an adopted child, to recover from an illness, recuperate from a military deployment, or to tend to an ill family member. If the proposed bill is passed, Washington D.C. will become the most generous place in the United States for an employee to take time off for family leave.

The legislation would more than double the length of any paid-leave program in the United States. In fact, only Rhode Island, New Jersey, and California guarantee paid family leave for working residents. Thus, D.C.'s plan is a big step toward matching policies that have already been enacted by some [private employers](#) and [other countries](#).

Under the proposed legislation, employers would be required to pay into a city-managed fund on a per-employee basis. For those earning up to \$52,000, the fund would pay 100 percent of the employee's pay. The family and medical leave benefits would equal 100 percent of the eligible employee's average weekly wages up to \$1,000 per week. For employees who earn over \$52,000 per year, the benefits would equal \$1,000 plus 50 percent of the employee's average earnings above that amount, up to a maximum benefit of \$3,000 per week.

The proposed legislation would have a significant impact on employers of all sizes and the D.C. Chamber of Commerce raised concerns about the bill in a [letter](#) sent to Councilmember David Grosso – a co-sponsor of the proposed legislation. The Chamber of Commerce worries that the bill would have a negative impact on the local economy, stating that "the bill would be unprecedented and make the District of Columbia dangerously uncompetitive at a time when the District is trying to compete for every job it can get."

The proposed legislation drastically changes D.C.'s current Family and Medical Leave law that permits a covered employee to use a total of 16 unpaid work weeks of family leave during any 24-month period. Given the significant financial impact that the proposed legislation will have on employers both big and small, this is an important piece of legislation for all D.C. employers to follow. If the legislation is passed, employers should implement a system to provide timely notice to its employees of their rights under the new law. A covered employer who violates the notice requirements will be assessed a civil penalty not to exceed \$100 for each covered employee and \$100 for each day that the covered employer fails to post the notice in a conspicuous

place.

We will keep our readers apprised of the legislation as it moves through the City Council.