

WHY WE NEED THE NYS FAMILY LEAVE BILL TO PASS THE SENATE

The Assembly has passed a Family Leave Bill 9245. The Senate is now being asked to submit same-as legislation.

This legislation would provide paid family leave in NYS, letting working parents spend the time they want, need, and deserve with newborns or newly adopted children. The bill would have workers pay an additional 40 cents per week into a disability insurance plan, allowing them to take up to 12 weeks off at half pay—up to \$170 a week.

Our current system forces an unfortunate choice upon far too many parents - go back to work when a child is just weeks old or risk not being able to pay the bills. Numerous studies show that paid leave improves children's health outcomes by making more time available to parents to provide essential care for children, by facilitating breastfeeding that reduces the risk of infections, and by increasing the likelihood that children will receive necessary immunizations, all of which contribute to lower infant mortality and morbidity rates.

More time for parents also allows for the formation of bonds between parents and children, fostering positive emotional development of children. Families who have adopted or who have a child with special needs often require even more time to form attachments and adjust to new family dynamics.

Paid family leave is particularly important with regard to child care arrangements. NYS, unlike many other states, does not prohibit licensed centers from accepting babies under six weeks old. However, centers must secure a waiver to serve those children. This is because babies' immune systems are not yet fully developed, putting them at increased risk of infection. Because of these necessary restrictions, working parents are often forced to place very young infants in unlicensed and possibly unsafe child care in order to return to work on time. This legislation would keep babies from unnecessary health risks.

Paid family leave legislation is a step in the right direction. New mothers or fathers should have the opportunity to stay at home with their babies for a little while longer, without risking economic hardship.

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