



## FACT SHEET:

# Paid Family and Medical Leave in Tennessee (HB 1872/SB 1858)

No one should have to sacrifice their financial security in order to care for themselves or a loved one. The Tennessee Family Insurance Act (HB 1872/SB 1858) would ensure that Tennesseans can take the time they need to care for themselves and their loved ones without sacrificing their income or savings.

### What is Paid Family Leave?

- The United States and Tennessee currently have no law providing all workers with paid leave to care for a new child or a seriously ill family member. Nationwide, only 16% of private sector employees receive paid family leave through their employers.<sup>1</sup>
- Low-wage workers and people of color, who are more likely to depend on every paycheck, are even less likely to have access to paid family leave.<sup>2</sup>

### What is Paid Medical Leave?

- Paid medical leave provides workers with extended time off to deal with a serious health need of their own. This includes acute conditions like cancer, chronic conditions like diabetes or asthma, or recovering from an accident or serious injury.
- Paid medical leave protects workers for whom limited paid sick time is not enough. About 30% of private sector workers have no paid sick time<sup>3</sup>, but for those who do, the national average of paid sick time for private sector workers is just seven sick days per year.<sup>4</sup> This is far too little for a serious health issue or injury.

### The Tennessee Family Insurance Act Would Provide Paid Family and Medical Leave to All Workers Without Burdening Employers.

- An employee-funded family and medical leave insurance program would ensure that Tennessee workers can take time off to care for themselves or a loved one without sacrificing their paycheck.
- By contributing very little each week (less than the cost of a cup of coffee), employees could pay into a fund to be used in case of a family or medical emergency.
- The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which guarantees covered workers time off from work to care for a new child or a seriously ill family member, only provides unpaid leave and only covers roughly 60% of all workers in the United States.<sup>5</sup> The Tennessee Family Insurance Act would address these major shortcomings.

### Paid Family and Medical Leave is Good for Public Health.

- When workers do not have the leave they need, they may defer or forego necessary medical treatment.<sup>6</sup> Paid leave allows workers to get the treatment they need, when they need it.
- Paid leave can help fight the opioid epidemic by protecting workers' jobs and income while they seek residential treatment, which can be highly effective in treating addiction.<sup>7</sup>
- Family caregivers can help ill and aging individuals recover more quickly and spend less time



the work and family legal center

2301 21st Ave. South, Suite 355, Nashville, TN 37212 | 615.915.2417 | [info@abetterbalance.org](mailto:info@abetterbalance.org) | [abetterbalance.org](http://abetterbalance.org)

in hospitals, reducing costs and relieving overcrowded health care facilities.<sup>8</sup>

- Research shows that inadequate follow-up care after a patient has returned home can result in complications, re-hospitalization, and even higher patient mortality, not to mention increased costs.<sup>9</sup>
- Paid leave increases the likelihood and duration of breastfeeding: The median duration of breastfeeding doubled for all new mothers who used one state's paid family leave program.<sup>10</sup> Breastfeeding has lasting health benefits for babies and mothers.

### **Paid Family and Medical Leave is Good for the Economy.**

- Paid family and medical leave allows workers to take time off to care for themselves or their loved ones without sacrificing their income or savings.
- By keeping workers with serious medical or caregiving needs attached to the workforce, paid family and medical leave decreases reliance on public assistance and other government benefits, which creates significant taxpayer savings.

### **Paid Family and Medical Leave is Good for Business.**

- An employee-funded paid family and medical leave program would help small businesses retain talented employees by providing a benefit that only larger companies can typically offer.
- Paid family and medical leave has been shown to increase employee retention, lower turnover, boost productivity, and improve employee morale.
  - 91% of employers surveyed in one state reported that paid family leave had either a positive or neutral effect on profitability after the program had been in place for many years.<sup>11</sup> A majority of employers in that state also reported positive or neutral effects on productivity (88.5%) and employee morale (98.6%).

**For more information on this issue, please contact A Better Balance at (615) 915-2417.**

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employee Benefits Survey: Mar. 2018, Table 32 (2018), available at: <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2018/ownership/private/table32a.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> National Partnership for Women and Families, "Paid Family and Medical Leave: A Racial Justice Issue- and Opportunity," (2018), p. 5, available at: <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/paid-leave/paid-family-and-medical-leave-racial-justice-issue-and-opportunity.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employee Benefits Survey: Mar. 2018, Table 32 (2018), available at: <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2018/ownership/private/table32a.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employee Benefits Survey: Mar. 2018, Table 35 (2018), available at: <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2018/ownership/private/table35a.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> A Better Balance, *Investing in Our Families: The Case for Paid Family Leave in New York and the Nation*, 2015, available at: <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/report-the-case-for-paid-family-leave-in-new-york-and-the-nation-2015/>.

<sup>6</sup> See Abt Associates Inc., Family and Medical Leave in 2012: Technical Report 131 (Sep. 2012), available at: <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/fmla/FMLA-2012-Technical-Report.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> See Nat'l Inst. on Drug Abuse, Treatment Approaches for Drug Addiction (revised Jan. 2018), available at: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/treatment-approaches-drug-addiction>.

<sup>8</sup> S. Reinhard, L. Feinberg, R. Choula, and A. Houser, Valuing the Invaluable: The Economic Value of Family Caregiving, 2015 Update, AARP Public Policy Institute (July 2015), available at: <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2015/valuing-the-invaluable-2015-update-new.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Pauline W. Chen, M.D., "Doctors as Advocates for Family Leave," The New York Times, Jan. 29, 2015, available at: <https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/29/doctors-as-advocates-for-family-leave/>.

<sup>10</sup> Eileen Appelbaum and Ruth Milkman, *Leaves that Pay: Employer and Worker Experiences with Paid Family Leave in California*, available at: <http://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> A Better Balance, "Busting the Myths on Paid Family Leave," 2017, available at: <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/busting-the-myths-on-paid-family-leave/>.