

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE FOR GEORGIA STATE EMPLOYEES



As of February 16, 2021, the House passed HB 146 (Rep. Gaines). This bill provides eligible state and school board employees with three weeks of paid parental leave for the birth of a child or the placement of a minor child for adoption or foster care. Federal law, the Family and Medical Leave Act, allows some employees up to 12 weeks off to bond with a new child; however, many workers are not covered under this law and, even for those who are covered, leave may be unpaid. This means that parents who need time to bond with a new child are forced to only rely on any existing paid time off they have been able to save up.

WHAT WOULD HB 146 DO?

- Covered employees who have been employed with the state for at least six months are eligible for up to three weeks of paid parental leave to bond with a child who joins their family through birth, adoption, or foster care placement, for a parent of any gender.
- The law would cover most state employees who are classified as full-time, along with many types of employees of local school boards (including many teachers, library workers, and paraprofessionals) who are classified as full-time.
- Employees can choose to use their leave all at once or to use it as needed, subject to certain rules.
- Eligible employees can't be punished or fired for exercising their rights under the law.

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE IS A SMART RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TOOL FOR THE STATE.

- Providing paid leave for both parents has been shown to increase employee retention and decrease turnover, saving employers money

by reducing rehiring and training costs. Paid parental leave also helps boost productivity and improve morale.

- 91% of employers surveyed in one state reported that paid family leave had either a positive or neutral effect on profitability. A majority of employers also reported positive or neutral effects on productivity (88.5%) and employee morale (98.6%).
- Paid parental leave will especially help retain qualified female employees, at a time when record numbers of women are leaving the workforce, often because of a lack of support for family and caregiving needs. Nationally, 865,000 women left the workforce in September of 2020 alone.
- Providing this benefit will give the state a competitive edge in recruiting the state's best and brightest employees, since many leading private sector employers provide generous paid family leave policies.

LARGE MAJORITIES OF GEORGIA VOTERS SUPPORT PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

- 9 in 10 Georgia voters support paid family leave.
- Paid parental leave has strong bipartisan support. 82% of polled Georgia Republican voters support paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child.

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE PROMOTES ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR WORKING FAMILIES, ESPECIALLY DURING A PANDEMIC.

- The pandemic has highlighted the increased need for paid family and medical leave to support workers and reduce risks to public health.
- Women provide a vital source of financial support to most Georgia families: Mothers are the primary or co-breadwinners in

two-thirds of families in our state. Women need paid leave to be able to keep their jobs and bond with new children.

- HB 146 will affect about 423,000 parents who are state employees. This policy will also help address disparities faced by women and people of color, as 66 percent of state workers are women and 55 percent are people of color.

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE IS A CRITICAL TOOL FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES.

- Paid parental leave is critical for promoting healthier children and families by supporting bonding with a new child during the critical first weeks after birth, foster placement, or adoption.
- Paid parental leave positively affects the mental and physical health of mothers and their children, breastfeeding rates, and immunization rates.
- Paid parental leave results in increased father-infant bonding, more equitable division of household labor, increased child-engagement, and improved health and developmental outcomes for the child.

SOURCES

- <https://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>
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- <http://geears.org/wp-content/uploads/GEEARS-2020-Polling-Summary.pdf>
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- wbstv.com, Georgia Department of Administrative Services FY 2019 State Workforce Report
- https://journals.lww.com/hrpjournal/Abstract/2020/03000/The_Impact_of_Paid_Maternity_Leave_on_the_Mental.5.aspx
- *The Health and Socio-Economic Benefits of Paid Parental Leave and Louisville Benchmarks, Louisville Department of Public Health & Wellness* (2019), <https://louisvilleky.gov/document/2019paidparentalleavepeercitiespdf-0>

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

YWCA Greater Atlanta; Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia; Georgians for a Healthy Future; National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum; New Georgia Project; Amplify GA; Poder Latinx; Feminist Women's Health Center; National Domestic Workers Alliance

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Please contact Mica Whitfield, Georgia State Director, at mica@9to5.org!