

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Expand Family Leave Protections During COVID-19 Outbreak

04/14/2020

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (S2374), which expands protections of the Family Leave Act to allow employees forced to take time off to care for a family member during the COVID-19 outbreak with up to 12 weeks of unpaid family leave in a 24-month period without losing their jobs.

Under the bill, employees will be eligible for leave to care for a family member as a result of an epidemic of a communicable disease, or efforts to prevent spread of a communicable disease. These job protections will extend to employees requiring leave to provide care or treatment for their child if the child's school or place of care is closed in response to a public health emergency.

"New Jerseyans should not have to make a decision between caring for a loved one with COVID-19 and keeping their job," **said Governor Murphy**. "Our state is already home to the nation's most comprehensive Family Leave Act, and it's only right that we expand these protections to meet the unprecedented health crisis we are facing."

"This public health crisis is putting enormous strains on families, especially those that need to care for a loved one who is infected," **said Senate President Sweeney, who authored the original family leave law**. "They should not be forced to choose between an ill family member and their job. While we are experiencing emergency circumstances that could not have been anticipated, this is what the law should be covering."

"Workers throughout the state with ill family members at home in need of care, or who have children at home because of school closures, are struggling to balance the responsibilities of their personal and professional lives," **said Senator Linda Greenstein**. "Family always comes first, and the benefits of our family leave law should be afforded to those who have had no choice but to stay home to care for their families."

In a joint statement, **Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker, Assemblyman Joseph Egan and Assemblywoman Linda Carter said:**

"Countless New Jersey residents have needed to take time off from work to care for family members due to the health crisis created by the spread of COVID-19, and many more will need to do so in the future. There's never been a more important time to strengthen our family leave program.

"In a time of growing uncertainty, every worker deserves to know they won't lose their job if they use family leave. This law also expands family leave for parents of school aged children who need to take time off due to school closures during this crisis.

"New Jersey has one of the most robust family leave laws in the nation. Today we make our program stronger to address the challenging times we are in."


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