

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Modify Family Leave and Disability Benefits In Response to COVID-19

03/25/2020

TRENTON – Today, Governor Phil Murphy signed S2304 into law to expand the State’s Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) and Family Leave Insurance (FLI) programs to provide more workers with access to paid leave benefits during public health emergencies.

“No one should have to decide between taking care of themselves or a sick family member and going to work during this pandemic,” **said Governor Murphy**. “With this new law, we are providing hardworking men and women with the protections that they deserve and ensuring a healthier place to live and work.”

“I am proud to see Governor Murphy taking every possible step to help our families and caregivers get through this unprecedented time,” **said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**. “We want to make sure that everyone affected by this history pandemic will be protected through the programs our department offers all New Jerseyans.”

S2304 expands the law’s definition of a “serious health condition” to allow individuals access to TDI and FLI benefits during a public health emergency if they must take time off of work because they are diagnosed with or suspected of exposure to a communicable disease or to take care of a family member diagnosed with or suspected of exposure to a communicable disease. The bill also expands New Jersey’s earned sick leave law to permit the use of earned sick time for isolation or quarantine recommended or ordered by a provider or public health official as a result of suspected exposure to a communicable disease, or to care for a family member under recommended or ordered isolation or quarantine.

Primary sponsors of S2304 include Senate President Stephen Sweeney, and Senator Nicholas Scutari and Assemblymembers Shavonda Sumter, Annette Chaparro, and Annette Quijano.

“The coronavirus pandemic is creating health care challenges with economic consequences for workers and their families, that are likely to become worse,” **said Senate President Stephen Sweeney, who authored the original Paid Family Leave Law**. “We must work together to be resourceful, responsive and proactive at a time when so many people are experiencing hardship due to the pandemic.”

“The health and wellness of our citizens continues to be our top priority as we navigate through this challenging moment in time,” **said Senator Nicholas Scutari**. “Those who have been forced to take an extended leave of absence from their jobs due to self-quarantining or are home taking care of a loved one are more than deserving to see these benefits afforded to them.”

Joint Statement from Assemblywomen Sumter, Chaparro and Quijano released the following statement:

“We are proud that New Jersey has one of the most expansive paid family leave and disability benefit programs in the nation. These vital resources ensure workers are able to take the time off they need to care for themselves and their families, while still receiving a wage. The more COVID-19 spreads, the more people



will need to self-quarantine and take time away from work. By extending family leave and disability benefits to people impacted by COVID-19, we will lessen the financial burden on workers who do not have access to unemployment benefits but still must stay home from work.”

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