



VT FaMLI

Vermont Family and Medical Leave Insurance

Policy Recommendations

◆ **Universal coverage**

We believe paid family and medical leave insurance programs should include everyone. Not only is it critical that every working Vermonter have access to this important support, but a universal pool also will ensure the most cost-effective program.

◆ **Publicly-run**

Nearly all paid family and medical leave insurance programs across the country are publicly-run. Public models give states the ability to set strong benefit parameters and keep administrative costs and benefits costs low. Privatizing programs of this nature could have significant drawbacks. Private insurance programs are driven by profit and have an inherent incentive to deny claims. Keeping Vermont's program publicly-run is a key component to ensuring our program operates effectively and meets the needs of Vermonters.

◆ **Minimum of 12 weeks**

Experts including the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that healthy full-term infants should not be enrolled in child care until they are at least 12 weeks old due to rapid developmental changes and the risk of quickly developing severe undetected illness.¹ Also, research shows that children whose mothers do not return to work full time in the first 12 weeks are more likely to receive medical checkups and critical vaccinations.²

◆ **Jointly-funded by employers and employees**

State paid family and medical leave insurance programs across the country are funded in a variety of ways. We believe the costs of a strong paid family and medical leave insurance program should be shared by employers and employees. Such a program will help support Vermont workers and the businesses that otherwise wouldn't be able to provide such a benefit on their own.

¹American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education, *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards*, Third Edition (2011).

² Lawrence M. Berger, Jennifer Lynn Hill, and Jane Waldfogel, "Maternity Leave, Early Maternal Employment and Child Health and Development in the US," *The Economic Journal* 115, no. 501 (2005).

◆ Allowable uses: parental, medical, and caregiving leave

This program is designed to provide essential support to Vermont workers during a variety of planned or unexpected challenging personal and family life events. We strongly believe in maintaining all allowable uses as outlined in H.107 as introduced.

◆ High wage replacement

If we want these programs to be available to all workers, and particularly low-wage workers who are least likely to have access to this benefit, the most important thing we can do is ensure high wage replacement levels. Some other state programs have fairly low wage replacement levels, leading to lower take-up rates among workers of lower incomes. We recommend keeping wage replacement levels high (between 80% and 100%) to ensure accessibility.

◆ Self-employed access

As the nature of employment continues to change in Vermont across the nation, it's important we consider how we can ensure workers of all types have access to important support systems like paid family and medical leave insurance. We believe portable benefits, such as this, are a component of what could help encourage entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses in Vermont, and are part of what keeps self-employed Vermonters afloat in challenging times.

◆ Job protection

We support universal job protection so that working Vermonters have the ability to take leave without the concern of losing their job.

VT FaMLI Coalition Members

American Association of Retired Persons - Vermont (AARP-VT)

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

Community of Vermont Elders (COVE)

Good Beginnings of Central Vermont

Hunger Free Vermont

Justice for All

Let's Grow Kids (LGK)

Main Street Alliance of Vermont (MSA-VT)

MomsRising

National Association of Social Workers (NASW-VT)

Parent Child Center Network

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE)

Public Assets Institute

Rights & Democracy (RAD)

Voices for Vermont's Children

Vermont AFL-CIO

Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR)

Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL)

Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance (VECAA)

Vermont Foodbank

Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA)

Vermont Legal Aid

Vermont Low Income Advocacy Council (VLIAC)

Vermont National Association of Educators (VT-NEA)

Vermont Network

Vermont State Employees Association (VSEA)