

Testimony in support of H7793

An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Rhode Island Parental and Family Medical Leave Act

House Committee on Labor

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The Economic Progress Institute supports Representative Giraldo's H7793, which increases the amount of parental or family leave available to an employee from thirteen weeks to twenty-four weeks in any two calendar years.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to take care of themselves and their loved ones during times of need. Rhode Island's Parental and Medical Leave Act allows workers the option to take unpaid, job-protected leave for their own serious illness, to bond with a newborn, or to care for a seriously ill family member.

The Rhode Island Parental and Family Medical Leave Act (RI PFMLA) currently provides workers with up to 13 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave. RI PFMLA is one of the few state programs that allows workers to prioritize caring for their families while maintaining job-security. Twenty-six weeks of leave is recommended for maternal and infant health and well-being.¹ PFMLA also supports family caregivers and aids promoting health equity for older adults and their caregivers.²

RI PFMLA provides workers the opportunities to be present for themselves and their families during times of crisis, such as a medical emergency or to provide end of life care for a parent or sibling, or during life transitions, such as welcoming a newborn into the household. Additionally, a majority of worksites report no difficulty complying with FMLA, as long they can disperse responsibilities to other workers.³

Many Rhode Islanders are family caregivers and are responsible for their ailing children, parents, siblings, grandchildren, and other loved ones. We must expand RI's Parental and Family Medical Leave Act now to ensure that all Rhode Islanders can receive the care they deserve. A comprehensive family leave program means a stronger Rhode Island. We urge passage.

¹ <https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/reports/paid-family-leave-how-much-time-enough/a-timeline-of-paid-family-leave/>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9017763/>

³ <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/key-facts-the-family-and-medical-leave-act.pdf>