

HB 12 (Costa Howard) Expansion of FMLA Support

Rationale for Support

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was passed more than a quarter century ago. Due to the ever evolving workforce environment, FMLA quickly became outdated:

- By 2018, 40 percent of households had a woman as the sole or primary breadwinner. It is no longer feasible to assume that after childbirth the mother will stay home with the child while the father will go back to work and take care of the household income.
- The United States of America is generally ranked last amongst all other developed nations when comparing medical and family leave policies.
- Concerns that family and medical leave insurance programs would have negative impacts on business and productivity have been largely unfounded. In fact, in the state of California where they have been in place since 2004, most employers have reported it has had either a positive impact or no impact whatsoever.

It is important to point out that the FMLA isn't only a benefit to newborn mothers. FMLA can also be used if an employee needs time to recuperate from a serious health condition, care for a family member with a serious health condition, or care for a family member who has sustained injuries while on active service duty for the military.

Furthermore, in order to become eligible for FMLA an employee must have worked 1,250 hours during the previous year. Unfortunately, this disqualifies many of our educational support staff from meeting the requirements of FMLA due to the limited number of days they are able to work during a school year. HB 12 reduces the minimum threshold to 1,000 hours so that more of our Education Support Personnel will qualify for FMLA.

Analysis

The Illinois Education Association supports full family and medical insurance under the FMLA in order to ensure equality among all members of the American workforce. Workers who have higher paying jobs tend to already have fully covered medical and family leave. Therefore, the current structure of the FMLA doesn't really help those who are making the least.

The Illinois Education Association supports:

- Fully insured medical and family leave for all employees;
- And an expansion of the FMLA requirements in order to cover more employees, specifically support staff.