

# Sen. Darling and Reps. Ballweg and Rohrka: Bill reduces red tape and reforms family and medical leave

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Madison- Taking time off to care for a loved one or for a medical condition can be confusing for both employees and employers. Lawmakers are trying to streamline those rules.

On Thursday, Senator Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) and State Representatives Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) and Mike Rohrka (R-Neenah) are authoring a bill which help clear up the confusion between the state and national versions of the law. Wisconsin is currently one of 13 states who has a state family and medical leave law that conflicts and overlaps with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

“It’s time Wisconsin ends the confusion about family and medical leave laws.” Darling said, “This is a common sense reform to streamline and simplify family and medical leave laws for employers, while still protecting this critical benefit for Wisconsin’s employees.”

While the state and federal family and medical leave codes are very similar, their

differences result in immense difficulties and confusion for employers.

“As a former Human Resources executive, I have seen firsthand how Wisconsin’s family and medical leave laws and the federal FMLA together create an unnecessary regulatory burden for employers across our state,” Rohrkaste said, “This legislation will ensure that Wisconsin employees are protected, while also simplifying an overly complex system for local employers.”

Under the bill, employers who are covered under the federal family and medical leave law are exempt from the state family and medical leave law. The bill maintains a state provision which allows employees to take leave to care for a spouse, child, parent, domestic partner, or parent-in-law who has a serious health condition.

“We have made great strides over the years to make Wisconsin a desirable place to do business and for employees to build a career,” Ballweg said, “I believe this is another positive step that maintains important protections for employees and simplifies regulations for employers.”

The bill is now circulating in the Senate and Assembly for co-sponsorship.