

# Sen. Ringhand and Rep. Pope: Legislators Introduce Family Medical Leave Insurance Act

Posted on Tuesday, Oct 22, 2019

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Madison, WI – State Senator Janis Ringhand (D – Evansville) and Representative Sondy Pope

(D – Cross Plains) introduced the Family Medical Leave Insurance Act (FMLIA). The Act creates a Family Medical Leave Insurance program completely paid for by employees. Under the program a participating employee is eligible to receive a percentage of their pay during the time they take family or medical leave from work. The program would not cost employers any money. Employees pay for the benefit by contributing a certain percentage of their check into a trust fund.

“I’ve had to take time off without pay to care for my son after he broke his leg. Luckily my husband had a good union job that could support our family. Far too many families live paycheck to paycheck and cannot afford to take any time off. The FMLIA will help many hard working Wisconsin families,” said Ringhand.

In addition, the Act seeks to expand Wisconsin’s current Family Medical Leave law by allowing employees to take family leave to care for anyone covered under the current law plus grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, and any eligible employee who has an eligible family member deployed overseas by the military.

“Our Family Medical Leave law needs updating to reflect the dynamics of modern families. Nationally, a growing number of employers and law-makers from both sides of the aisle have indicated support for allowing people to take paid leave from work under certain circumstances,” said Representative Pope.

California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island and Washington have already passed paid family medical leave laws and implementing one in Wisconsin is a priority of the Wisconsin Legislative Democrat’s Forward Together Agenda.

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## **What others are saying about the**

### **Family Medical Leave Insurance Act (FMLIA)**

“Few policies have the power to improve the health, lives, and economic security of Wisconsin women and their families like paid family medical leave. From caregivers, cancer patients, victims of domestic abuse and new parents, this legislation must be advanced by our elected leaders to help Wisconsinites take paid leave, keep their jobs and care for themselves or a family member,”

**Sara Finger**, Founder and Executive Director of the Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health.

“People shouldn’t be forced to choose between their job and their family,” said State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski, “We need paid family leave to ensure Wisconsinites aren’t forced to make that choice when caring for a new child or a loved one facing a serious illness. Access to paid family leave isn’t just good for hardworking people, it’s also good for businesses, for recruiting employees, retention, and reducing turnover costs. States around the country are seeing the strengths of these policies, and it’s time for Wisconsin to step up.”

**Sarah Godlewski**, Wisconsin State Treasurer

“Wisconsin faces a black infant and maternal mortality public health crisis. Access

to paid family medical leave has the prospect to be part of the solution to this crisis. Ecologically sound policies, such as paid family medical leave, have the potential to directly improve maternal and child health outcomes, as well as promote economic security for all workers in WI.”

**Tia Murray**, CEO of Harambee Village Douglas

“The perk of having access to a game room only goes so far. We are competing for talent from around the country and luring folks from the coasts to Wisconsin. Paid family leave would provide Wisconsin businesses a cost-savings employee retention tool; workers could afford to take time off when they expand their family, deal with personal illness or injury or care for a loved one. This is about economic security for our workforce while building a 21st century economy”.

**Scott Resnick**, COO of Hardin Design & Development, EiR at StartingBlock

“Paid family medical leave is vital for the health of Wisconsin children and families.”

**Dr. Sarah Webber**, Pediatrician and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

“People who work at a job outside of the home, and serve as caregivers inside of the home, are some of the hardest working people in our economy. For those of us who want to handle our responsibilities both at work and at home, paid family and medical leave insurance is an investment so that we can cover both.”

**Becca Donaldson**, 9to5 member