



## **SUPPORT ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE WORKERS WITH UP TO 12 WEEKS OF PAID LEAVE TO CARE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS**

**The Paid Family Leave Act A.3870-B/S.3004-B**

**Sponsors: Assembly Member Cathy Nolan/Senator Joseph Addabbo Jr.**

**NYS PAC Position: SUPPORT**

The New York State Public Affairs Committee (NYSPAC) of the Junior Leagues supports the enactment of legislation that would allow New York State's workers to remain in the workforce and still receive income, while taking leave to care for their family. The Paid Family Leave Act (PFLA, A. 3870 / S. 3004) will provide workers in New York State with up to 12 weeks of paid leave a year to bond with a new child, care for a seriously ill family member, or address certain issues arising from a family member's military service.

While New York, and the United States, has made great strides in securing worker's rights, the country remains the only industrialized nation to fail to guarantee workers paid family leave. Existing legislation, namely the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), still has many gaps, including the fact that more than 40% of workers are ineligible for FMLA leave. In addition, since FMLA is unpaid, many of our state's workers cannot afford to take advantage of their rights under this statute due to tough economic conditions. The notion of "work-life" and "work-family" balance is quickly becoming a fleeting possibility for our labor force, while the need has become ever more immediate.

The benefits to providing paid family leave are numerous. It will provide crucial support to New York's families when a family member becomes seriously ill, or a new child enters the family. The PFLA also serves those who have served our country – allowing workers to use paid family leave to address certain legal, financial, and childcare issues related to the military service of a spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent. In California, the implementation of paid family leave has been overwhelmingly positive. **Workers who have used paid family leave report as much as 46% higher positive effect and ability to care for their children; in addition, the number of males using bonding leave has increased.**

The PFLA would not place undue burden on New York State's businesses, nor will it create new administrative requirements. As part of the Temporary Disability Insurance program (TDI), which has been in place since 1950, employers will be able to use whatever mechanism they currently use to comply with TDI requirements to comply with the PFLA. It also **will not increase employer's payroll costs.** The paid family leave benefit will be financed solely through employee payroll deductions of up to 45 cents a week in the first year. In subsequent years, New York's Superintendent of Financial Services will determine the amount of employee contributions based on the cost per worker of providing paid family leave through the state insurance fund. The cost of raising the TDI benefit level will continue to be shared, as in the current TDI program, by both workers and employers. **Employers will also benefit with lower employee turnover, increased productivity, and increased morale.** 91% of employers in California reported "no noticeable effect" or "positive effect" on profitability/performance since the enactment of paid family leave, and 98.6% and 88.5% reported the same for morale and productivity, respectively.

**New York State's workforce will also be protected as part of the PFLA.** Workers will be able to use paid family leave without fear of discrimination, or job loss. Also, paid family leave will allow those who may not be financially able to take advantage of the right to FMLA leave a chance to provide care to valued family members, with a greater sense of financial security. Workers will receive two-thirds of their average weekly wage while taking paid family leave, up to a maximum benefit level. This maximum benefit level will be raised in steps over four years until it equals 50% of the statewide average weekly wage. The proposed bill will also modernize New York's TDI system by raising the TDI benefit level for the first time in more than 25 years.

With the high participation rates in our workforce by mothers and caregivers, combined with the competing pressures of paid work and family responsibilities, the time to enact paid family leave in New York State is now. We must provide opportunities for New York's families to bond with new children, and also care for ill family members, without the fear of the financial repercussions this may cause. On behalf of more than 8,000 women represented by the 18 Junior Leagues of New York State, we urge you to enact the Paid Family Leave Act. **For more information, please contact NYSPAC at [info@jl-nyspac.org](mailto:info@jl-nyspac.org) or Chairwoman Rose Feor at [rose.feor@gmail.com](mailto:rose.feor@gmail.com).**