



HB 628: Family and Medical Leave Insurance

New Hampshire needs a strong workforce to keep our economy growing. Caregiving duties are one of the biggest barriers keeping qualified workers out of our labor market.

Access to paid family and medical leave helps aging workers stay in the workforce, increases the odds of success for working people recovering from substance use disorder and leads to higher workforce participation among new parents.

HB628 would establish a family and medical leave insurance program administered by the Department of Employment Security

- This insurance would provide temporary, partial wage replacement to working people who need time off to care for themselves or a family member;
- Medical certification demonstrating need would be required to qualify for benefits;
- Benefits would be available for up to 6 weeks per year and cover 60% of an individual's weekly wage (up to a cap, currently equal to \$886.00);
- Employers who offer a comparable plan could opt out and employees have a one-time opportunity to opt out at the beginning of employment, so there is no mandate to participate.

The cost of benefits and ongoing administration of the program would be covered by employee paid premium payments

- HB 628 would create a program funded through voluntary employee contributions of 0.67% of wages, employers would not be required to contribute to the program;
- Based on the Department's testimony before the Commerce Committee, the changes made in the recent amendment raising the premium rate to 0.67% and lowering the maximum benefit period to 6 weeks would make the Department confident in the solvency of the program even if no public sector employees participate and half of the private sector workforce opt out;

HB628 is supported by a bipartisan list of cosponsors

- 82% of New Hampshire residents support establishment of a family and medical leave insurance program;
- Access to paid leave reduces reliance on public social welfare benefits, a 2012 Rutgers University study "Pay Matters" found access to paid family leave reduces a woman's likelihood of using food stamps by 40% in the year following childbirth.
- 90% of employers in states with similar programs reported a "positive effect" or "no noticeable effect" on productivity, performance, and profitability.
- Over 100 New Hampshire businesses have signed a letter of support for HB628

On January 9, 2018 the House supported an OTP recommendation from House Labor, Industrial and Rehabilitative Service Committee, 183-151. On February 8, 2018 the House overturned the House Commerce Committee's ITL recommendation and then voted OTPA by a vote of 186-164. On March 22, 2018 the House voted OTP by a vote of 171-162.