

**BLOGS**

Department of Labor;Employment Law Updates;Leave

The Push Towards Paid Family and Medical Leave Continues

As anticipated, President Barack Obama celebrated Labor Day by issuing an [executive order](#) mandating that federal contractors provide paid sick leave to their employees. The executive order requires that federal contractors and subcontractors provide their employees up to seven days of paid leave per year for themselves, to care for a sick family member, or to address domestic violence and stalking situations.

President Obama's order is the latest in a series of executive orders aimed at federal contractors as the administration tries, so far unsuccessfully, to get broader legislation in place. This past spring, the U.S. Department of Labor established a paid leave resource [web page](#), and Labor Secretary Thomas Perez led a roadshow to advocate for the expansion of paid leave in the United States. In addition, the proposed Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMILY) Act was introduced into Congress in March. The FAMILY Act, which remains pending in Congress, would provide partial paid time off for employees taking time off from work for family or medical reasons. Under the FAMILY Act, the partial paid time off would be funded by both employees and employers.

In addition to these pushes at both the executive and legislative levels, an [open letter](#) to Congress is gaining national attention this week. The letter was signed by more than 200 business school professors from 88 higher education institutions. These professors wrote in support of a national paid leave standard, including the one provided under the FAMILY Act. The letter stresses the business benefits of providing paid leave, which according to the authors include controlling costs and maximizing productivity through higher retention rates. The letter references state sick leave programs adopted in California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island as successful examples of paid leave insurance programs.

While it appears unlikely that the FAMILY Act or similar legislation will pass during this Congressional term, efforts to require paid family and medical leave at the national level will likely continue. Additionally, an increasing number of cities and states have implemented sick leave laws that impact employers with operations in those locations. To ensure compliance, employers should remain watchful for expanding paid sick leave requirements at the local and state level and should continue to track current and future legislation at the national level.

Related People

Tana S. VanGoethem

Counsel

Minneapolis

612.632.3294

tana.vangoethem@lathropgpm.com