



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1076

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass A.9245, which would provide for the payment of disability benefits to employees who take family leave, either to bond with a child under the age of one, or to care for a sick relative.

By Council Members Brewer, Fidler, Gennaro, Gentile, Gonzalez, James, Mark-Viverito, Nelson, Palma, Reyna, Sanders Jr., Stewart, Weprin and The Public Advocate (Ms. Gotbaum)

Whereas, It is difficult for workers to find and maintain a healthy work-life balance given the demands of today's busy world; and

Whereas, Households headed by a single parent and households where both spouses hold full-time jobs are more common than ever, increasing the number of workers who are strained to find adequate time to care for family members; and

Whereas, Child development studies show the importance of early parent-child bonding, yet for economic reasons parents are often forced to return to work very shortly after a child is born or adopted, potentially destabilizing family life; and

Whereas, Due to advances in medicine and the increasing length of the average human lifespan, more workers are finding it necessary to take time off from work to care for elderly parents or loved ones who are seriously ill; and

Whereas, Although many such workers may be eligible under the 1993 federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for twelve weeks of unpaid leave, a report by the U.S. Department of Labor entitled, "FMLA Survey: The 2000 Survey Report," found that 78 percent of workers who needed leave but did not take it said the reason they refrained was because the leave was unpaid and they could not afford it, and this figure was an increase from 66 percent of such workers in 1995; and

Whereas, A.9245, introduced in the New York State Assembly, would provide a cash benefit, structured within the existing Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) program administered by the Workers' Compensation Board, for eligible workers for up to twelve weeks while a worker is on leave to bond with a newborn, newly adopted child, or newly placed foster child, or to care for a family member who is seriously ill; and

Whereas, A.9245 would also increase the maximum weekly payroll deduction from employees from 60 cents per week to 60 cents plus an additional amount equal to the average cost of providing coverage for family care, to be set at 45 cents for the first year and thereafter to be determined by the Superintendent of Insurance; and

Whereas, A.9245 would cover virtually all private employers and those public employees who are already TDI program participants; and

Whereas, The United States is one of the few developed countries that does not provide paid benefits to workers for family leave, and a July 26, 2005 USA Today article entitled "U.S. stands apart from other nations on maternity leave" reported that "out of 168 nations in a Harvard University study conducted in 2004, 163 had some form of paid maternity leave, leaving the United States in the company of Lesotho, Papua New Guinea and Swaziland;" and

Whereas, In 2002, California became the first state in the nation to provide paid family leave, and in April of 2007 the state of Washington became the second state to do so; and

Whereas, Bills similar to A.9245 are being proposed in many states, including Connecticut, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Oregon and Illinois; and

Whereas, The passage of A.9245 would show the commitment of New York to support its working families; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass A.9245, which would provide for the payment of disability benefits to employees who take family leave, either to bond with a child under the age of one, or to care for a sick relative.

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