

DC Passes One of Country's Most Generous Paid Leave Laws

On April 7, 2017, Washington, DC passed one of the more robust paid parental leave laws in the nation. In doing so, it joins a growing number of cities and states, including San Francisco and New York, to pass legislation aimed at increasing paid leave to employees. Only 12% of American workers are offered paid leave through their employers.

Summary of the Law

The Act, which becomes effective on July 1, 2020, provides covered employees with:

- Up to 8 weeks of paid parental leave, which may be taken within one year following (1) birth of a child, (2) placement of a child for adoption or foster care, or (3) placement of a child where the eligible individual legally assumes and discharges parental responsibility.
- Up to 6 weeks of paid family leave for employees to provide "care or companionship" to a family member who has a diagnosis or occurrence of a serious health condition.
- Up to 2 weeks of paid medical leave for the diagnosis or occurrence of the employee's own serious health condition.

To qualify for family or medical leave, the employee must demonstrate the presence of a "serious health condition," which includes a physical or mental illness, injury, or impairment that requires inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential health care facility, or continuing treatment or supervision at home by a health care provider or other competent individual.

More about the law

The paid leave will be funded by a 0.62% increase in DC employer payroll taxes one year before it takes effect. Full- and part-time employees will be eligible if they worked for their employer at some point in the prior year, meaning that they must have been a covered employee "during some or all of the 52 calendar weeks immediately preceding the qualifying event."

Next Steps for Employers

We will continue to monitor and provide you with updates regarding the new law. This e-Alert reflects our understanding of the law as of right now; however, there may be some additional clarity down the line:

1. All District of Columbia employers will need to comply by the beginning of July 1, 2020.
2. Review your current leave-of-absence policies and employee handbook to ensure they are compliant with these new regulations.

If you are one of our full-service clients, we will work with you to review your current leave-of-absence policy to ensure it is compliant with this new law and update your employee handbook. Please email us and an HR advisor will be happy to assist you.

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