

Gov. Pritzker Signs Historic Legislation Guaranteeing 40 Hours of Paid Leave

Press Release - Monday, March 13, 2023

CHICAGO — Governor JB Pritzker today signed SB208 into law, making Illinois the third state in the nation, and the first in the Midwest, to mandate paid time off to be used for any reason. The historic legislation provides employees with up to 40 hours of paid leave during a 12-month period, meaning approximately 1.5 million workers will begin earning paid time off starting in 2024.

"Working families face so many challenges, and it's been my mission to alleviate those burdens in every way I can. Today, we will become the third state in the nation to require paid time off, and the first among the largest states," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "Employers benefit from allowing employees to tend to the urgent personal matters of their lives. Workers' productivity increases, and they often gain greater passion for their job when they can manage the stresses they face outside work. I'm exceptionally proud that labor and business came together to recognize the value of this requirement to employees and employers alike."

"Life happens. When you don't have the space to be fully present to help with a family emergency or take care of something you need to attend to, it can be very stressful," **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton**. "With this Act, we are protecting wages and providing relief for residents and their families while taking another major step to make our state the best place to live and work."

Under existing law, workers are not guaranteed pay when taking time off for sick leave, childcare, mental health reasons, medical appointments, vacation, or any other reason. Starting on March 31st, 2024, or 90 days following commencement of employment, workers can begin using their earned time off for any reason without the requirement of providing documentation to their employer under the Paid Leave for Workers Act.

This new law applies to every employee working for an employer in Illinois, including domestic workers, but does exclude independent contractors. The City of Chicago and Cook County have an existing paid sick leave ordinance in place; employees and employers in those two geographic regions will be subject to those ordinances. The law will also exempt employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement in the construction industry and parcel delivery industry.

The legislation provides that paid leave shall accrue at the rate of one hour for every 40 hours worked. Employees will be paid their full wage while on leave and tipped workers will be paid the minimum wage in their respective locale. An employer cannot require an employee to find their replacement for the leave.

"Paid leave is one of the most significant pieces of legislation we have passed to move our state forward in over a generation. It's a game changer for so many working families," **said State Rep.**

Jehan Gordon-Booth, (D-Peoria). "Whether it's to help with a family health emergency, or to take a break for one's mental health, paid leave is critical to the wellbeing of working people. Even contributors to Forbes recognize this is more than just great social policy, it's great economic policy that can help to recruit and retain top talent. I am proud to have negotiated paid leave and look forward to seeing it fully implemented and the positive impact it is going to have on individuals across our state."

"It's not uncommon for life to get in the way of work - be it your child unexpectedly gets sick or your car breaks down. You shouldn't be punished for these everyday obstacles," **said Senate Majority Leader Kimberly A. Lightford (D-Maywood).**

"With the signing of this legislation, we are leading a significant, positive impact on the lives of residents across our state and underscoring our commitment to uplifting working families."

"The guarantee of paid leave for all is about making workplaces fairer, and also about making families stronger," **said House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch.** "Being able to care for a sick child, meet basic life needs, or taking time to tend to your own mental health shouldn't be luxuries, but basic rights. Ensuring every worker has access to basic paid leave ensures that no one will ever have to choose between being there for their family or providing for their family."

"Guaranteeing paid leave for all is about valuing every person in a workplace, and showing compassion for every experience," **said House Majority Leader Robyn Gabel, (D-Evanston).** "This law recognizes the added burden placed on working mothers. It sends the message that no worker is somehow less deserving of the flexibility to tend to basic needs. And it improves our workplaces by empowering every person to care for themselves and those around them."

"If we want to create a more compassionate state that understands the needs of working families, paid leave is a necessary step forward," **said State Rep. Camille Y. Lilly, (D-Chicago).** "Particularly for those who may be helping a family member with an illness or any other type of emergency, guaranteed paid leave will help to remove significant stress. I am appreciative of our collective work that made today a reality and the positive impact it will have in every community."

"When faced with something like a sudden family illness, people, especially working parents, need to be able to take time away from their jobs without serious consequences," **said State Rep. Lakesia Collins, (D-Chicago).** "Guaranteeing paid leave is an important step for worker's rights that will make a substantial impact on thousands of families in communities across Illinois."

"Paid leave is a basic right for all workers. Along with safe working conditions and fair salaries, a person being allowed to take time off in case of an emergency shouldn't be in question," **said State Rep. Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz, (D-Glenview).** "Passing this bill represents progress for economic equality for tens of thousands of people in communities across Illinois."

"As a mother, I know how difficult it can be to balance family obligations with work, especially for those who work multiple jobs. Taking care of a sick family member shouldn't mean a day without pay," **said State Rep. Lisa Hernandez (D-Cicero)**. "Paid leave for all workers is a lifeline for working families, giving them the flexibility to take time off to care for their children or loved ones without potentially devastating economic consequences."

"Working families need to know that Springfield and their employers are on their side when times are tough," **said State Rep. Will Guzzardi, (D-Chicago)**. "Needing to take a mental health break, tending to a family emergency, or driving a child to and from a doctor's appointment shouldn't be punished with a smaller paycheck, and this legislation is a bold step in ensuring Illinois workers are valued and respected."

"Paid leave is going to be a boon to our hardest working families who often have far less flexibility than more affluent people," **said State Rep. Barbara Hernandez, (D-Aurora)**. "For instance, high-wage parents can send their kids to a reliable preschool. However, working-class single parents may have to rely on a friend or neighbor for childcare. If that friend is unavailable to help with childcare, that parent may not be able to work. That's just one reason why paid leave is so vital. This bill brings much-needed income equality to Illinois' working class."

"For many workers, a day without pay could mean the difference between paying rent or feeding their families, making days off work impossible or extremely difficult. No one should be faced with such difficult choices," **said State Rep. Dagmara 'Dee' Avelar, (D-Bolingbrook)**. "This increased agency treats workers with the dignity and respect they deserve, empowering them to take care of themselves and their families without loss of income or employment."

"Guaranteeing this essential right is an important step forward for Illinois," **said State Rep. Theresa Mah, (D-Chicago)**. "Thousands of workers have had to face terrible situations where emergencies spring up and they have had to risk serious consequences at their jobs in order to take of those emergencies. Passing this bill should put an end to that for Illinois workers for good."

"Lower-income families and workers living paycheck-to-paycheck often don't have the luxury of taking unpaid time off because their daily wages mean the difference between stability and crisis," **said State Senator Cristina Castro (D-Elgin)**. "The Paid Leave for All Workers Act will ensure all employees in our state can rely on at least one week of paid leave per year where an emergency or a child's illness won't break their family's wallet and send them into financial ruin. I'm proud of what we've done for working families with this historic legislation."

"All workers deserve to take sick time without worrying they will miss a paycheck or lose their job. This legislation prioritizes the needs of working families, ensuring they have the support they need to thrive," **said State Senator Ann Gillespie (D-Arlington Heights)**. "Guaranteed paid leave is not only a matter of fairness but a smart economic policy. By allowing workers to take time off to care for themselves or their loved ones, we are supporting their well-being and reducing the financial burden on families and our health care system."

"In my People's Legislative Council initiative, single moms from our district told me that they often struggle to get time away from work to attend their kid's parent teacher conferences, attend sporting events, or get a sick child to the doctor," **said State Senator Mike Simmons (D-Chicago)**. "It is important all employees in Illinois, especially working single-parents and those with families, have the time they need to handle what is happening at home without worrying about missing a paycheck. I am proud to see this legislation being signed into law today. The Paid Leave for Workers Act will help everyday people balance family time with work."

"People need to be able to take time off when life unexpectedly gets in the way," **said State Senator Ram Villivalam (D-Chicago)**. "The path toward a more equitable workforce starts with ensuring all workers have the deserved safety net of paid time off. We have taken a positive step toward committing to working families that their livelihood is of utmost importance."

"Our most vulnerable communities are comprised of working families who often have trouble finding time outside of work to handle various family crises," **said State Senator Robert Peters (D-Chicago)**. "As the backbone of our state, working families deserve breathing room for life's setbacks. Paid leave supports families in times of crisis and helps protect hard-earned jobs. This law will undoubtedly help families maintain a sense of financial stability and ultimately keep our communities safe."

"Families in my community and across Illinois face many competing priorities: work, family, education, and more. Making sure they can take five days of paid leave is the least we can do to support them," **said State Rep. Edgar Gonzalez (D-Chicago)**. "I am proud of our years of work to bring labor advocates, business leaders and employees together on this critical issue, and I look forward to further cooperation to support common sense labor legislation."

"This measure, the result of compromise and collaboration, provides what employers and employees want - consistency and simplicity," **said Rob Karr, President & CEO of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association (IRMA)**. "We thank Governor Pritzker, Rep. Gordon-Booth, and Sen. Lightford for fostering a spirit of collaboration on this issue, and hope this serves as a model for how business, labor and policy makers can effectively work together."

"The peace of mind the Paid Leave for All Act provides every worker in our state is invaluable. It sends a message to workers that we care about providing a stable work-life balance, and they deserve time to respond to personal situations, whatever the nature may be. Forward-thinking legislation like this is one of many reasons Illinois workers enjoy a quality of life that is second to none," **said Chicago Federation of Labor President Bob Reiter**.

"This bill is a victory for all working Illinoisans, but especially for the 1.5 million workers who until now were facing impossible choices every day, weighing their family's health and wellbeing against a paycheck," **said Cherita Ellens, President and CEO of Women Employed**. "This is a critical step towards helping level the playing field of workplace rights for working people- particularly women and people of color in low paid jobs."

"No one should have to choose a paycheck over their well-being," **said Audra Wilson, President and CEO of the Shriver Center on Poverty Law**. "That's why we focus on creating a level playing field for women workers with low wages, Black workers and Latinx workers—who in many cases cannot afford to take unpaid leave. This recent victory will have a huge impact on helping all working families."

"This legislation strikes the right balance between ensuring employees receive the time off they need and providing businesses flexibility to implement these policies," **said Mark Denzler, President and CEO of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association**. "We appreciate the leadership of Gov. JB Pritzker, Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth, and Sen. Kimberly Lightford for bringing stakeholders together to reach this historic compromise."

"No one should ever be faced with having to decide between their job, family or their physical or mental health," **said Tim Drea, President of the Illinois AFL-CIO**. "Now, workers in our state will have a guaranteed, minimum amount of paid time off that they can use for any reason - whether it is visiting a doctor, attending a parent-teacher conference, caring for a family member, or recovering from domestic violence. We are grateful to all our partners in this fight to make paid leave a guaranteed right for Illinoisans."

"Our members appreciate the leadership shown by Governor JB Pritzker, and by House Sponsor Deputy Majority Leader Jehan Gordon-Booth and by Senate Majority Leader Kimberly A. Lightford, in advancing this crucial piece of legislation. Thanks to their advocacy and the tireless efforts of our members over the past four years—delayed but not thwarted by the onset of the pandemic—working families in Illinois will now receive the leave they need and deserve," **said Erica Bland-Durosini, Executive Vice President of SEIU Healthcare**. "As frontline caregivers who have also struggled to care for their own families, our members have prioritized the fight for paid leave as well as working to lift up wages in the state--and both efforts have now yielded significant gains for working families. This law will provide families the ability to address the demands of everyday life while still paying their bills."

"Everyone experiences the need to take time off from work from time-to-time," **said Illinois Department of Labor Director Jane Flanagan**. "Now, under the Paid Leave for All Workers Act, employees will be able to take time to address basic life needs without the threat of losing their pay or their job."

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