



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Marc Panepinto

## Do Right By Our Families: Senator Panepinto, Community Rally In Support Of Paid Family Leave

MARC PANEPINTO November 13, 2015

| ISSUE: **PAID FAMILY LEAVE**



**Buffalo, N.Y.** - Today, **Senator Marc Panepinto (D-Buffalo)** stood with small business owners, local labor leaders and experts in support of legislation to provide New York State residents with paid family leave. The only high-income nation in the world not to offer paid family leave, U.S. residents including 4.1 million family caregivers in New York State are currently left to shoulder an unfair financial burden, forced to choose between taking care of loved ones and financial stability. Senator Panepinto co-sponsors **The Paid Family Leave Insurance**

**Act (S.3004)**, that would provide up to 12 weeks of paid leave to bond with a new child, care for a seriously ill family member, and deal with issues that arise when a family member is called to active military service.

Currently stalled in the Senate Labor Committee, S.3004 passed the Assembly in March. If passed, this legislation would create a separate fund within the state insurance fund known as “Disability Benefits Fund” to provide paid leave at a rate of two-thirds of an employee’s average weekly rate. Standing in a show of support with community members Friday, Senator Panepinto called on his colleagues in the Senate to prioritize this life-changing piece of legislation for the 2016 legislative session:

“Having to choose between a paycheck and caring for a loved one -- it’s an unfortunate reality, but all too often it’s a choice many New York State families are forced to make,” **said Senator Marc Panepinto**. “As residents continue to face a growing income inequality gap, coupled with an inability to take reasonable time from their jobs for family care these heartbreaking situations will continue to rise. It is time New York State stood up for its families. I am proud to co-sponsor legislation that will put a definitive end to this unacceptable status quo. As we head into the 2016 legislative session, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to prioritize this common-sense piece of legislative and provide New York’s families with the peace of mind they deserve.”

Senator Panepinto’s co-sponsored legislation would establish New York as the fifth state in the country to provide this necessary benefit. The legislation would create a paid family leave insurance benefit that is employee-paid, through small payroll deductions that start at just 45 cents and rise to roughly 88 cents a week over four years. The bill would also modernize New York’s Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) program, the critical support system for new mothers physically recovering from childbirth, which is currently frozen at the 1989 rate of \$170 per week. This would mean a small cost shared between employees and

employers – one that would not be burdensome for businesses and is woefully overdue.

**Richard Lipsitz, President of the Western New York Area Labor Federation said,** “The United States is the only country in the industrialized world that does not offer statutory paid time off to care for the needs of the family. That is nothing short of shameful. No one should have to choose between financial stability and taking care of a loved one. I am proud to stand with Senator Panepinto as he works to prioritize the basic needs of New York State residents and call on our State Legislature to help put our families first.”

As 67 percent of New York State children reside in households where both parents work to support the family, the need for such legislation grows by the day. Without it, unanticipated medical emergencies, valuable time needed to bond with newborn children and longer life expectancies with our elder population will continue to push families into difficult financial situations.

**Dr. Constantina Spiropoulos, M.D., a pediatrician with Integrity Health Group’s Main Pediatrics location in Buffalo said,** “To build healthy communities, we must start by supporting working families. This means empowering and educating parents, and providing them with the time to nurture their children. Paid family leave is essential to the healthy development of children and the future of our society.”

While efforts are currently underway to provide paid leave on a federal level, there is still a long road ahead. Only 13 percent of employees nationwide currently have access to this life-changing solution. Studies already show that paid leave benefits not only had a positive impact on families themselves, but their places of employment and the surrounding economy.

A recent study showed that an overwhelming majority of California employers believe PFLI has had a positive or neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were more likely than

large businesses to report that PFLI has a neutral or positive effect. In fact, studies showed employees only took as much leave as is needed, with the average employee using less than the full amount allowed under the law.

"From Buffalo to Rochester, Gouverneur to Plattsburgh, Syracuse to Albany and down the Hudson to Long Island and New York City, New York families are calling on legislators to pass paid family leave legislation," **said Blue Carreker, Citizen Action of New York and the NY Paid Family Leave Insurance Campaign.** The need is clear. And the New York Paid Family Leave Insurance Act offers a tested solution, with a very low price tag because the cost is shared by everyone. Let's not wait another year. We can and must do this in 2016."

The United States is one of the last remaining countries to enact a federal policy of paid family leave. Four states—California, Hawaii, New Jersey and Rhode Island—now have paid family leave. The growing volume of research links paid family leave with improved health outcomes for mothers and infants; greater long term learning outcomes for children; and greater economic security for women and families. Research also indicates real benefits for business, including increased employee retention, job loyalty, and productivity.

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**2015-S3004**

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- Introduced
  
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
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Provides benefits for injury, sickness, pregnancy or family leave

February 02, 2015

In Senate Committee [Labor](#)

Sponsored by [Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.](#)

Do you support this bill?