



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Release: Addabbo Expresses Optimism that Overdue Paid Family Leave Policy Will be Negotiated and Passed by New York State in 2016

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. January 29, 2016

Howard Beach, NY (January 29, 2016) With Governor Cuomo calling the approval of a paid family leave program a priority in 2016, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. is optimistic that a policy to help New Yorkers more easily take legitimate time off from work to bond with a new baby, address family difficulties arising from military leave and care for seriously ill spouses, parents and other loved ones may finally become a reality in the Empire State.

Addabbo, who sponsors comprehensive paid family leave legislation (S.3004/A.3870) along with Assemblymember Cathy Nolan, has been a proponent of such a policy since his days in the City Council prior to his election to the State Senate in 2008.

“People should not be forced to choose between keeping their jobs and caring for their families, particularly when a new child is born or in times of crisis – including the serious illness of a spouse, aging parent or other loved one, or during difficulties that may arise as a result of military service,” said Addabbo. “It’s already hard enough for many New York families to succeed on the work front while juggling any number of responsibilities on the home front. I am very pleased to see growing momentum on this issue, and I look forward to the approval of a state paid family leave policy that will not only aid families in need, but

benefit businesses through increased employee morale, productivity and loyalty at little cost.”

Pointing out that Governor Cuomo and Senator Jeffrey Klein have both proposed paid family leave policies that differ from the plan he is advancing with Assemblymember Nolan, Addabbo said, “With all of this welcome and very positive interest in the issue, it’s clearly not a question of whether New York State will enact paid family leave: it’s only a question of when. In the end, my overall concern is that our final law to aid New York families and businesses is truly helpful, effective in reaching its goals, workable and affordable for all concerned.”

The legislation championed by Addabbo and many other advocates throughout New York State provides 12 weeks of paid family leave to people who need time off from work to care for a new baby, meet the needs of sick family members or address issues arising from active military duty. Employees taking the leave benefit would receive two-thirds of their own average weekly wage, not to be paid by their employer, with the maximum benefit capped over four years at 50 percent of New York’s average weekly wage, which was \$1,266.44 in 2014. Initially, the benefit would cost workers up to 45 cents a week through employee payroll deductions – rising slightly in future years as the maximum benefit cap rises – and it would also be funded through the state’s existing Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) program by small increases in employer premiums. It would cover all employers, both public and private, that are subject to general workers’ compensation laws.

In comparison, Senator Klein’s bill (S.3401) provides six weeks of paid family leave, applies only to public employers with 25 or more workers, provides lower replacement wage benefits than S.3004/A.3870 (only 50 percent of an employee’s average weekly wage, rather than two-thirds) and is ultimately capped at 50 percent of the statewide average weekly wage. The benefit is fully funded by the state in its first year with costs split between employees and

the state in future years. It also does not address family leave associated with military active duty.

The Governor's plan would permit 12 weeks of paid family leave, apply to all private employers with an opt-in by public employers, and begin by providing benefits equal to 35 percent of an employee's average weekly wage – less than the two-thirds benefit proposed by Addabbo and Nolan. The benefit would rise to 50 percent of the individual employee's weekly earnings, but the maximum wage payment would be capped at 50 percent of the state's average weekly wage after four years. The Governor's proposed program is fully funded by employees.

"The Paid Family Leave should benefit both the workers and their employers," said Addabbo. "It should help to provide businesses with more loyal and productive workers who know they won't be fired from their jobs when they need to take care of truly pressing responsibilities at home. I look forward to working with Governor Cuomo and all of my Senate and Assembly colleagues on both sides of the aisle to finally witness an effective and credible state paid family leave policy in New York State."