



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## New York Enacts Paid Family Leave

JOSE M. SERRANO February 14, 2018

| ISSUE: **PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

I am happy to report that the benefits of New York's Paid Family Leave program are now in place as of January 1, 2018. You may recall that, as part of the passage of the 2016 State Budget, my colleagues and I passed the most comprehensive paid family leave program in the nation. This family friendly workplace initiative allows hardworking New Yorkers to care for a sick relative, nurture a new baby, or help assist when a family member is called to active service without fear of penalization or job loss.

No one should have to choose between caring for a loved one and losing their ability to support themselves and their family. That is why my colleagues and I implemented the paid family leave program to balance the needs of hardworking New Yorkers and those of our business community. The delay in implementation from 2016 was to transfer monies from the workers' compensation fund to cover the paid family leave program until employee contributions accrued sufficiently. Phased in over a four-year period, this comprehensive family benefit costs less than \$2 a week – the price of a typical cup of coffee!

Once fully phased in, this program establishes a 12-week benefit that is the most expansive in the nation. Below are some details:

- In 2018, the number of weeks available is eight weeks. In 2019 and 2020, the number of weeks available is ten weeks. In 2021 and thereafter, the number of weeks available is 12 weeks.
- The program caps wages paid at the statewide average weekly wages. The benefit in 2018 is 50% of employee's average weekly wages, capped at a maximum of 50% of median wages, up to a maximum weekly benefit of \$650/week.
- This program is funded entirely through a nominal payroll deduction on employees so it costs businesses – both big and small – nothing. The weekly contribution is set at a small percent of wages and the maximum contribution is no more than \$1.65 per week. Many working class people will pay only 50-60 cents per week.
- Employees are eligible to participate after having worked for their employer for six months

My Senate Democratic Conference colleagues and I have long advocated for this program to ensure that working families can assist their loved ones without facing economic hardship. We have taken a giant step forward in making New York State a more affordable place to live, work, and raise a family.

For more information on the paid family leave program, go to <https://www.ny.gov/programs/new-york-state-paid-family-leave>