



Fact Sheet

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE DEMOCRATS

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The Hon. Bobby Scott • Ranking Member

The FMLA at 25:

Building on the Family and Medical Leave Act

Far too many are faced with the irreconcilable choice— earning a paycheck or taking care of a loved one. The changing nature of the workforce demands flexible workplace policies that help workers balance their responsibilities at home and on the job.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), enacted on February 5, 1993, created a strong foundation which helped Americans balance work and family. The FMLA allows eligible employees who work for an employer with 50 or more employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave. An employee can use this leave to care for their own serious health conditions, to care for a new child or a seriously ill or injured loved one, or to address military family care needs.

Unfortunately, too few workers are covered under the law, and those who are covered oftentimes must choose between earning an income and caring for their families:

- About [40 percent](#) of workers are not covered by the FMLA.
- [46 percent](#) of workers who needed FMLA leave did not take it because they could not afford to take unpaid time off.
- An estimated [31 percent](#) of employees who take FMLA leave cut their leave time short because of the financial strain of reduced or no pay.
- Only [13 percent](#) of private sector workers have access to paid family leave through their employers.
- Workers lose over [\\$20 billion](#) annually because of a lack of access to paid leave.

[The Family and Medical Insurance Leave \(FAMILY\) Act](#) (H.R. 947), introduced by Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (CT-03), guarantees workers, regardless of where they work or who they work for, the right to take leave without worrying about loss of income or their jobs. The FAMILY Act would reduce by [75 percent](#) the share of families by who currently fall into poverty after taking the unpaid leave under the FMLA.

[The FAMILY Act:](#)

- Provides 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave to workers to care for a new child, themselves, or a relative with a serious health condition;
- Covers the vast majority of all workers regardless of their employers size;
- Allows workers to earn two-thirds of their monthly wages; and
- Is funded by a national family leave insurance program which receive contributions from employers and employees. This amounts to two-tenths of 1 percent of wages each or two cents per \$10 in wages.