

Jersey Lawmaker Pushes Paid Family Leave Bill

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Establishing a paid family leave program in Jersey has been talked about for years, but legislation has never been passed because of stiff opposition from the business community.

However one Jersey legislator is pushing a family leave plan that appears to be gaining momentum.

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State Senator Stephen Sweeney says his legislation calls for up to 12 weeks of paid family leave - so a worker can care for a seriously ill family member, and "there's protections to make sure it can't be abused, and it's employee paid - not employer paid."

The proposal calls for employees who take time off to be paid a portion of their normal salary through the State's temporary disability insurance fund. Most Jersey workers would be required to contribute an extra dollar a week to the fund to pay for the program.

Sweeney says this is really about having compassion for people.

"If something unfortunate happens in their life" he says, "they really shouldn't have to choose between their job and their family."

Many Jersey business leaders say they have concerns about the proposal, and some fear they might get stuck paying for family leave if the disability fund falters.

Current Federal law allows workers in companies that have at least 50 employees to take up to 3 months of unpaid leave in emergency situations.

By: David Matthau

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