

JOB PROTECTION & PAID FAMILY LEAVE



NJ paid family leave is a 15 year old employee-funded insurance program that gives NJ families crucial financial support when they need to take time off to care for a new child or a seriously ill loved one. But it does not have "leave guarantee"

Access to paid family leave is out of reach for many because they fear job loss and lack job protection.

35% of NJ workers do not qualify for job protection under the NJ Family Leave Act (NJFLA).

And 57% of lower earning workers do not qualify for these job protections.

61% of workers of color report concern about job loss compared to 38% of white, non-Hispanic workers.

The Problem

1. Nearly all employees in NJ pay into our paid family leave program, called NJ Family Leave Insurance (FLI), but too few get to use it. In 2021, approx. 3.7 million NJ workers were covered by FLI but there were only 46,160 eligible claims filed.
2. New Jersey is no longer a leader on paid leave and has fallen behind other states' paid leave policies which protect workers' jobs during leave. Ten of the 12 other states with a paid leave program also include job protection when taking paid leave benefits. These include RI, NY, MA, CT, OR, CO, DE, MD, MN & ME.
3. Low-wage and workers of color are disproportionately less likely to be covered under job protection laws because they work for small employers, work part-time jobs or switch jobs more frequently. They also report fear of losing their job at more than higher earners and white, non-Hispanic workers.



At least 840,000 workers across the state lack job protection if they take leave because they work for a business with fewer than 30 employees. And nearly 90% of all New Jersey businesses have fewer than 30 employees.



Solution:

Ensuring workers' job protection coverage would increase access to paid leave & make taking it more equitable and less confusing. Job protection must be included along with paid leave benefits. No one should have to forsake being with their loved ones and the benefits they have paid for because they could lose their job.