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Senate sends landmark paid family and medical insurance program to Governor for her signature

HB 2005: Every Oregon worker gets 12 weeks of paid leave for family purposes

SALEM – A landmark paid family and medical leave insurance program passed the Oregon Senate today and is on its way to Gov. Kate Brown for her signature.

[House Bill 2005](#) provides every Oregon worker 12 weeks of paid leave to welcome a new child, recover from a serious illness, care for loved ones recovering from serious illness or deal with issues related to domestic violence, harassment, sexual assault or stalking.

“At some point, almost every Oregonian will need to take time away from work to deal with a family or medical issue, whether it’s to welcome a new child, help a loved one with a serious illness or injury, or to deal with your own health issue. No one should have to choose between paying their bills or caring for a loved one or for themselves,” said Sen. Kathleen Taylor (D-Milwaukie), who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “This bill will provide a safety net that today’s workforce currently doesn’t have in Oregon.”

Modeled after Oregon’s unemployment insurance program, paid family and medical leave insurance will be available to all Oregonians who made at least \$1,000 in a calendar year. The program will be supported with payroll assessment, not to exceed 1 percent, split between employees and employers. Employers with more than 25 employees will contribute 40 percent of the overall contribution. Small employers with fewer than 25 employees will not have to contribute, though employees still will be able to utilize the program. Small businesses choosing

to pay into the program will be eligible for grant programs to help cover the cost of replacement workers.

A tiered benefit is offered through the program, with 100-percent wage replacement available for low-income Oregonians who make less than 65 percent of Oregon's average weekly wage. The wage replacement decreases as average weekly income increases.

Currently, seven states and the District of Columbia offer, or soon will offer, some form of paid parental or family leave. The United States is one of the few economically advanced nations in the world that does not provide this benefit.

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