



# Health Impact of Proposed Legislation: New Parent Leave Act (SB 63)



## The New Parent Leave Act, SB 63

by state Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara) would allow individuals who work for a company with 20 employees or more to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to care for a new child.

## The Health Impact of Parental Leave

Family bonding is critical to the health of mothers (and all parents), infants and children.

Parental leave is associated with:

### Improved maternal health

Improved physical health of women<sup>2,3</sup>

Less diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, breast cancer<sup>4</sup>

Improved mental health of women<sup>2,5</sup>

### Improved birth outcomes

Decreased preeclampsia<sup>6</sup>

Decreased preterm birth<sup>7-9</sup>

Decreased low birth weight<sup>7,8</sup>

### Improved infant + child health

Duration of breastfeeding<sup>10-13</sup>

Increased immunizations + preventive health services<sup>1,11</sup>

Decreased infant mortality<sup>7</sup>

## The Current State of Parental Leave

Currently individuals at companies with 50+ employees have the right to 12 weeks of unpaid leave from their work without risk of losing their job.

### Inequity in Parental Leave Access

- Individuals at smaller companies lack job protection for taking time off to care for their new child, despite the fact that they are already paying into the state's Paid Family Leave Program through payroll deductions.
- Many individuals who are ineligible for protected family leave under existing law are less educated, earn lower wages, and fear repercussions from their employer for taking parental leave<sup>1</sup>.

**SB 63 would address this inequity in access to protected family leave.**

## Healthy Mothers Workplace Coalition

A group of nonprofits, government agencies, and employers collaborating to improve the working conditions, equity, and health of pregnant women and new parents

# SB 63 Health Impacts - Key Points

## Parental Leave Promotes Maternal Health

- Women who take leave prior to delivery are less likely to have a c-section.<sup>3</sup>
- Employment conditions can have a significant impact on maternal mental health.<sup>14</sup>
- Longer parental leave is associated with mothers having more energy, better mental health and better functioning.<sup>2, 5</sup>

## Parental Leave Promotes Healthy Birth Outcomes

- Job stress and working during pregnancy are associated with preeclampsia,<sup>6</sup> which can lead to complications for the mother and baby.
- Paid parental leave decreases the likelihood of preterm birth, low birth weight and infant mortality across socioeconomic groups.<sup>7, 8</sup>

## Parental Leave Promotes Infant and Child Health

- Parental leave is associated with longer duration of breastfeeding, increased immunizations and preventive health services, and shorter hospital stays.<sup>1, 10-13</sup>
- Parental leave has a positive effect on a parent's ability to care for their child, arrange child care, and bond with their child.<sup>10</sup>

## Parental Leave is a National and International Recommendation

The following organizations recommend parental leave as a health policy:

- **The Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** recommends paid maternity leave for all employed mothers to support breastfeeding.<sup>15</sup>
- **American Public Health Association** recommends paid family leave and greater coverage of the US workforce.<sup>16</sup>
- **The World Health Organization (WHO)** recommends six months of mandatory paid maternity leave to support breastfeeding.<sup>17</sup>
- **The International Labour Organization of the United Nations** recommends paid maternity leave of at least 18 weeks.<sup>18</sup>

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