



HM 3 – SM 1 Paid Family & Medical Leave Task Force

Summary: HM 3, sponsored by Reps. Linda Serrato, Christine Chandler, and Patricia Roybal Caballero, and SM 1, sponsored by Sen. Mimi Stewart, would form a state task force to study the implementation of family and medical leave in New Mexico and deliver a report to the Governor by Oct. 1, 2022. The task force will include members of statewide nonprofits that serve woman and girls, the interests of children, elders, and the disabled, would include representatives from Tribal government and statewide organizations representing businesses, LGBTQ persons, African Americans, and the bureau of business and economic research at UNM.

History: The Healthy Workplaces Act, passed in 2021, provides one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked, but is not comparable to family and medical leave programs in other states, which offer much more robust benefits to workers who need family and medical leave to maintain their employment. With what has been learned in the current pandemic, it's clear that New Mexico needs better protections for their working families.

Why HM 3 – SM 1 Is Good for New Mexico

1. The Urban Institute reports that states with paid family and medical leave programs in 2020 were better able to withstand the impacts of economic downturn related to the COVID pandemic and experienced less burden on their unemployment insurance programs.
2. Paid family and medical leave programs are associated with improved outcomes in the earliest years of life, including higher rates of breastfeeding and immunization and lower rates of child abuse, domestic violence, and financial instability.
3. The number of workers providing unpaid care for elder family members is increasing as the U.S. population over age 65 grows.
4. Many working New Mexicans who experience serious medical conditions currently have limited access to paid or unpaid leave through their employers and often delay medical treatment until an emergency arises.
5. Women-led households and communities of color face the greatest burden of caregiving for children and elders, and the pandemic forced millions of women, especially mothers, out of the workforce due to increasing family caregiving responsibilities.
6. According to a U.S. Census Survey published in November 2021, 21.5% of New Mexico parents lost their jobs due to childcare issues during the pandemic, almost 7 times the national average of just 3.2%.
7. New Mexico business are facing a worker shortage, and paid family and medical leave is associated with improved employee recruitment, retention, and morale.
8. Ninety-six percent of New Mexico businesses have fewer than fifty employees and are not required to provide unpaid leave through the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Most small businesses cannot afford to provide employer-based paid leave benefits to employees.

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