

LEGISLATIVE NEWS for July 2004

Paid Family leave takes effect July1, 2004.

California is now the first in the nation to provide PAID Family Leave for an estimated 13 million workers. Although the family leave law has been around for the past 10 years, relatively few took advantage of it since it was unpaid time. However, the state estimates that 300,000 employees would file this year alone for the paid time.

Eligible employees will be able to take up to six weeks off in each 12- month period. They will receive 55 percent of their normal wages during that time, up to a maximum of \$728 a week. Employees can take this time off to bond with their newborns, adopted or foster children, or to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, domestic partner or parent. This benefit is funded through the monthly employee contributions to the State Disability Insurance Program.

Although there are no job protection provisions in the Paid Family Leave Act, companies with 50 or more employees are required to guarantee return rights. There is a lot of speculation on how this law will effect the work environment and only time will tell if it improves morale or becomes another funding burden for employers.