



OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Vermont State House
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*****PUBLIC STATEMENT*****

Statement of Lt. Governor Molly Gray on the Administration's Proposed Voluntary Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program

Montpelier, Vt. — This afternoon, Lt. Governor Molly Gray released the following statement on the Administration's proposed Voluntary Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance ("FMLI") Program:

"Throughout my term as Lt. Governor, I've heard from Vermont working families struggling to balance caregiving and paying the bills. As one of the oldest states in the nation, with a growing aging population, we see unpaid caregivers, often times women, stepping in to care for sick parents or loved ones when crisis strikes.

In fact, during the pandemic Vermont labor data showed a disproportionate number of women leaving the workforce all together.

There is a generation of Vermonters who continue to find themselves as the sandwich generation – caring for aging parents and children at the same time.

The Administration's Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance program announced today fails to address the need and circumstances of Vermont workers and families.

First, the insurance program is voluntary which means that a worker must choose to enroll. A worker must either know they are preparing to start a family or anticipate a family crisis. The whole purpose of universal paid family and medical leave program is to support families through *unexpected* family emergencies. Workers should know in times of crisis Vermont employers have their back; workers should not be forced to make predictions.

Second, the insurance program provides 6 weeks of paid leave in a 12-week period to allow for the "birth of a child and to care for a newborn child during the first year of birth". The expectation that a mother, or parent, would return to work after 6 weeks is regressive and arcane



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and not only ignores [best medical advice](#), but is counter to the realities of childbirth and caregiving in the important first weeks of life.

Finally, the insurance program caps salary reimbursement at 60% of salary. At a time when a majority of Americans are living pay check to pay check and [can't afford an emergency expense of \\$400 or more](#), a suggested 60% salary reimbursement is naïve to the economic realities of working families.

Paid Family and Medical Leave isn't a nice thing to have, it is a must have. All Vermont workers deserve a minimum of 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave. I strongly support the legislature in crafting and passing a plan that truly considers and addresses the realities facing caregivers, parents and working families in Vermont."

The Lt. Governor will be co-hosting a Legislative Summit on Paid Family and Medical Leave this Thursday, December 8, 2022 at the Vermont State House. Learn more:

<https://ltgov.vermont.gov/paidleavechildcaresummit>

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