

Paid Leave American-Style: “I Get Mine, But You Can’t Have Yours!”

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Employers are all too familiar with the FMLA, but paid leave seems to be generating a lot of political buzz these days. A new Pew Research Center Survey reveals that a paid leave law might be a popular measure. However, the same survey also reveals that most Americans are cynical when it comes to the *use* of such leave. The Pew study found that, of those surveyed, about 75 percent of Republicans and about 90 percent of Democrats support some kind of federal law that requires employers to offer paid family leave. Interestingly, the survey also showed that 55 percent of Americans think it is at least somewhat common for workers to *abuse* paid leave. In other words, the average American supports a paid leave law, but is leery that people would take advantage of paid leave – anyone but themselves, of course. The survey’s findings show that most Americans think leave abuse is (or would be) common, which doesn’t shock most employers who are used to dealing with a barrage of FMLA requests that oddly seem to come every Monday and Friday. Yet, the talk about paid leave isn’t going away anytime soon. Indeed, some states and local governments have passed laws providing employees with some form of paid leave (e.g., New York, Arizona), so consider updating your policies. In the meantime, with growing public support, a national paid leave law might not be all that far from becoming reality.

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