
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1977 Session of
2021

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OCTOBER 18, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND INDUSTRY, OCTOBER 18, 2021

AN ACT

1 Providing for paid leave time for a pregnancy loss or related
2 reason.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Pennsylvania
7 Support Through Loss Act.

8 Section 2. Definitions.

9 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
10 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
11 context clearly indicates otherwise:

12 "Assisted reproductive technology procedure." The term shall
13 have the same meaning as "assisted reproductive technology" in
14 section 8 of the Fertility Clinic Success Rate and Certification
15 Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-493, 42 U.S.C. § 263a-7).

16 "Department." The Department of Labor and Industry of the

1 Commonwealth.

2 "Domestic partner." With respect to an unmarried employee,
3 includes:

4 (1) the person recognized as the domestic partner of the
5 employee under a domestic partnership or civil union law of a
6 state or political subdivision of a state; and

7 (2) an unmarried, adult person who is in a committed,
8 personal relationship with the employee, who is not a
9 domestic partner as described in paragraph (1) to or in a
10 relationship with any other person and who is designated to
11 the employee's employer by the employee as that employee's
12 domestic partner.

13 "Employer." A person engaged in commerce or in an industry
14 or activity affecting commerce who employs five or more
15 employees for each working day during each calendar workweek or
16 more in the current or preceding year.

17 "Paid leave time." An increment of compensated leave that
18 can be granted to an employee for use during an absence from
19 employment for any reason described in this act.

20 "Secretary." The Secretary of Labor and Industry of the
21 Commonwealth.

22 "Unpaid leave time." Leave granted and used in the same
23 manner and under the same conditions as paid leave time for the
24 purposes of this act, except that no compensation shall be paid.

25 Section 3. Paid leave time.

26 (a) General rule.--An employer shall grant to each employee
27 employed by the employer 24 hours of paid leave time on the
28 employee's first workday of each calendar year. The employee
29 shall use the paid leave time as needed during that calendar
30 year for reasons described in subsection (d).

1 (b) No carryover.--Paid leave time granted under this
2 section shall not carry over from one year to the next.

3 (c) Paid leave policy.--An employer with a paid leave policy
4 who makes available an amount of paid leave that is sufficient
5 to meet the requirements of this section and that is made
6 available for all stated reasons and under all stated conditions
7 that are the same as the reasons and conditions under subsection
8 (d) shall not be required to grant an employee additional paid
9 leave time under this section.

10 (d) Reason for leave.--Paid leave time granted under this
11 section may be used by an employee for either of the following:

12 (1) An absence resulting from:

13 (i) a pregnancy loss;

14 (ii) an unsuccessful round of intrauterine
15 insemination or an unsuccessful round of an assisted
16 reproductive technology procedure;

17 (iii) a failed adoption match or an adoption that is
18 not finalized because it is contested by another party;

19 (iv) a failed surrogacy arrangement; or

20 (v) a diagnosis or event that impacts pregnancy or
21 fertility.

22 (2) An absence to care for a spouse or domestic partner
23 who experiences a circumstance described in paragraph (1).

24 Section 4. Prohibited acts.

25 It shall be unlawful for an employer to interfere with,
26 restrain or deny the exercise of or the attempt to exercise a
27 right provided under this act, including:

28 (1) discharging or discriminating against, including
29 retaliating against, an individual, including a job
30 applicant, for exercising or attempting to exercise a right

1 provided under this act;

2 (2) using the taking of paid leave time or unpaid leave
3 time under this act as a factor in an employment action, such
4 as hiring, promotion, reducing hours or number of shifts or a
5 disciplinary action; or

6 (3) counting the paid leave time or unpaid leave time
7 under a no-fault attendance policy or any other absence
8 control policy.

9 Section 5. Notice requirement.

10 (a) General rule.--An employer shall notify each employee
11 and include in an employee handbook the information described in
12 paragraphs (1), (2) and (3). Each employer shall post and keep
13 posted a notice, to be prepared or approved in accordance with
14 regulations prescribed under this act, stating excerpts from, or
15 summaries of, the pertinent provisions of this act, including:

16 (1) information describing paid leave time available to
17 employees under this act;

18 (2) information pertaining to the filing of an action
19 under this act; and

20 (3) information that describes:

21 (i) the protections that an employee has in
22 exercising rights under this act; and

23 (ii) how the employee can contact the department if
24 any of the rights are violated.

25 (b) Location.--The notice described under subsection (a)
26 shall be posted:

27 (1) in conspicuous places on the premises of the
28 employer, where notices to employees, including applicants,
29 are customarily posted; or

30 (2) in an employee handbook.

1 (c) Penalty.--An employer who willfully violates the posting
2 requirements of this section shall be subject to a civil fine in
3 an amount not to exceed \$100 for each separate violation.

4 Section 6. Civil action by employees or individuals.

5 (a) Right of action.--An action to recover the damages or
6 equitable relief prescribed may be maintained against an
7 employer in a court of competent jurisdiction by one or more
8 employees or individuals or a representative for, and on behalf
9 of:

10 (1) the employees or individuals; or

11 (2) the employees or individuals and others similarly
12 situated.

13 (b) Liability.--An employer who violates section 4 shall be
14 liable to an employee or individual affected:

15 (1) for damages equal to:

16 (i) the amount of:

17 (A) wages, salary, employment benefits or other
18 compensation denied or lost by reason of the
19 violation; or

20 (B) in a case where wages, salary, employment
21 benefits or other compensation have not been denied
22 or lost, any actual monetary losses sustained as a
23 direct result of the violation up to a sum equal to
24 24 hours of wages or salary for the employee or
25 individual;

26 (ii) the interest on the amount described in
27 subparagraph (i) calculated at the prevailing rate; and

28 (iii) an additional amount as liquidated damages;

29 and

30 (2) for equitable relief as may be appropriate,

1 including employment, reinstatement and promotion.

2 (c) Fees and costs.--The court, in an action under this
3 section, shall, in addition to any judgment awarded to the
4 plaintiff, allow reasonable attorney fees, reasonable expert
5 witness fees and other costs of the action to be paid by the
6 defendant.

7 Section 7. Administrative action.

8 (a) Duty of secretary.--The secretary shall receive,
9 investigate and attempt to resolve complaints of violations of
10 section 4, including a violation relating to the rights provided
11 under this act.

12 (b) Penalty.--The secretary may levy an administrative
13 penalty of up to \$5,000 per violation.

14 Section 8. Civil action by department.

15 The secretary may bring an action in a court of competent
16 jurisdiction to recover the damages described under this act.

17 The following apply:

18 (1) Money recovered by the secretary under section 6
19 shall be held in a special deposit account and shall be paid,
20 on order of the secretary, directly to each employee or
21 individual affected. The money not paid to an employee or
22 individual affected because of inability to do so within a
23 period of three years shall be deposited into the General
24 Fund.

25 (2) An action may be brought no later than two years
26 after the date of the last event constituting the alleged
27 violation for which the action is brought.

28 (3) In the case of an action brought for a willful
29 violation of section 4, the action may be brought within
30 three years of the date of the last event constituting the

1 alleged violation for which the action is brought.

2 (4) In determining when an action is commenced under
3 this section, an action shall be considered to be commenced
4 on the date when the complaint is filed.

5 Section 9. Regulations.

6 The department may promulgate rules and regulations to
7 administer and enforce this act.

8 Section 10. Effective date.

9 This act shall take effect in 60 days.