

RCW 50A.05.005 Intent. The legislature finds that the demands of the workplace and of families need to be balanced to promote family stability and economic security. The legislature also finds that families across the state own and operate businesses. Workplace leave policies are desirable to accommodate changes in the workforce such as rising numbers of dual-career couples, working single parents, and an aging population. In addition the impact of significant new requirements should be reasonably balanced to help small businesses thrive.

The legislature also finds that access to paid leave is associated with many important health benefits. Research confirms that paid leave results in decreased infant mortality and more well-baby visits and reductions in maternal postpartum depression and stress. The legislature further finds that paid leave increases the duration of breastfeeding, which supports bonding, stimulates positive neurological and psychological development, strengthens a child's immune system, and reduces the risks of serious or costly health problems such as asthma, acute ear infections, obesity, Type 2 diabetes, leukemia, and sudden infant death syndrome. The legislature also finds that when fathers have access to paid leave they are more directly engaged during the child's first few months, thereby increasing father infant bonding and reducing overall stress on the family.

The legislature declares it to be in the public interest to create a family and medical leave insurance program to provide reasonable paid family leave for the birth or placement of a child with the employee, for the care of a family member who has a serious health condition, and for a qualifying exigency under the federal family and medical leave act, and reasonable paid medical leave for an employee's own serious health condition and to reasonably assist businesses in implementing and maintaining a program to support their employees and family. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 5 s 1. Formerly RCW 50A.04.005.]