



Economic Opportunity Institute

Small Business Views on Family and Medical Leave Insurance

In the summer and fall of 2006, EOI conducted 47 interviews with small business owners and managers in western Washington about a proposed Family and Medical Leave Insurance program. Small businesses were located in Aberdeen, Bainbridge Island, Bellevue, Clinton, Edmonds, La Conner, Langley, Lynnwood, Mt. Vernon, Mukilteo, Poulsbo, and Seattle.

Washington’s Family and Medical Leave Insurance program (FMLI) would provide for up to 5 weeks of job-protected leave with benefits of \$250 per week to care for a new child, a seriously ill family member, or the worker’s own illness. Workers would pay premiums of 2 cents per hour, and would be eligible to take leave after 680 hours of work. Businesses of all sizes would be included, and part-time workers would receive prorated benefits.

87% of small businesses interviewed support Family and Medical Leave Insurance. They said:

- FMLI would help small businesses retain dependable employees, especially part-time workers who have no sick pay or vacation benefits.
- FMLI would provide all workers with job security and a safety net.
- Most small businesses believe FMLI should apply to businesses of all sizes *without* incentives.
- Most small businesses already provide job protection for workers who need family leave.
- Most small businesses anticipate family leave situations and reduce risks by cross training, maintaining a pool of former employees, and hiring part-time employees to float between jobs.
- Safeguards are needed to address potential abuse.

TYPE OF BUSINESS	SUPPORT FMLI	SIZE OF BUSINESS	SUPPORT FMLI
Retail	13 of 14 (93%)	1-5 employees	9 of 9 (100%)
Restaurant	7 of 10 (70%)	6-10 employees	12 of 15 (80%)
Professional Services	9 of 10 (90%)	11-15 employees	9 of 10 (90%)
Manufacturing	4 of 4 (100%)	16-20 employees	2 of 2 (100%)
Educational Services	4 of 4 (100%)	21-30 employees	5 of 5 (100%)
Recreation	1 of 2 (50%)	31-40 employees	3 of 4 (75%)
Community Service	3 of 3 (100%)	40+ employees	1 of 2 (50%)

For Interview Summary and more info, please visit the EOI website at www.eoionline.org