

Reclaiming **Worker Power**
Energizing **Our Movement**
WASHINGTON STATE LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING EXPANDING JOB PROTECTION WITHIN WASHINGTON'S PAID
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM**
RESOLUTION #2024.13

WHEREAS, organized Labor has led in the passage and implementation of Washington's best-in-nation paid family and medical leave program since 2017; and

WHEREAS, paid family and medical leave provides up to 18 weeks of wage replacement for workers to care for themselves or family members through a serious medical emergency or welcome a new child into a family; and

WHEREAS, 173,000 Washingtonians were able to take time to care for themselves or their family in 2023 without being forced to choose between their paycheck and the family who depends on it; and

WHEREAS, paid family and medical leave provides compensation for the essential work of caregiving, with the majority of unpaid family caregivers being women and whose work has historically been uncompensated and attended to by public policy; and

WHEREAS, paid family and medical leave paid out \$1.3 billion in worker benefits in 2023 alone, allowing working families to pay for groceries, housing, and transportation while also supporting local businesses; and

WHEREAS, paid family and medical leave is made possible by the payroll premiums paid by employees in Washington State. Employees are required to contribute unless they work for the federal government, but these contributions do not guarantee access to the program; and

WHEREAS, workers taking paid family and medical leave are only guaranteed job restoration and continuation of health care benefits if they work for an employer with at least 50 employees, have worked at that employer for one year, and have worked 1,250 hours in the past year; and

WHEREAS, preliminary data from the University of Washington in a forthcoming study finds that only 5.7% of Washington businesses employ more than 50 employees and are therefore not covered by this job protection standard. The study notes that Washington's current standards for job protection, "likely make job-protected leave less available to women, less-educated workers, and workers of color than other workers;" and

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WHEREAS, without access to job protection, workers are less likely to take their leave benefit or take it for the full duration they are entitled to. Lack of job protection also threatens workers' access to health care benefits for themselves and their families at the worst possible moment; and

WHEREAS, WSLC and its affiliates continue to advocate for a robust paid family and medical leave system that is equitably accessible to the working people in Washington whose payroll premiums make possible this life-changing benefit; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO urges the Washington State Legislature to pass legislation in the 2025 legislative session to expand job protection and health care benefits continuation to all leave takers; and finally, be it

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO will support introduction of this legislation and prioritize it for the 2025 legislative session.