



FACT SHEET:

Paid Parental Leave for Tennessee Teachers (HB 983/SB 1458)

Tennessee educators work hard to teach and care for our children. Providing dedicated paid parental leave will ensure they can take the time they need to recover from childbirth and bond with their new child without sacrificing their income or savings.

Tennessee's teachers need stronger support for caregiving needs.

- Most families cannot afford to take extended time off work without pay.
- Without dedicated paid parental leave, teachers must either take unpaid leave or exhaust their paid sick and vacation days when a new child arrives, leaving them with no remaining paid leave in case their child becomes sick later on.
- Providing paid parental leave separately ensures that teachers can reserve their paid sick days for when they truly need them.
- Tennessee's peers in Georgia have already enacted a paid parental leave policy for public K-12 school educators.¹

Providing paid leave is a smart business decision, especially in today's highly competitive labor market.

- Paid family leave has been shown to increase employee retention and decrease turnover, saving money on rehiring and training costs.
- Paid family leave also helps boost productivity and improve employee morale.
 - 91% of employers surveyed in one state reported that paid family leave had either a positive or neutral effect on profitability.² Large majorities of employers also reported positive or neutral effects on productivity (88.5%) and employee morale (98.6%).
- This is especially critical as school districts across the state struggle with high turnover and a shortage of qualified educators. According to a 2021 survey of Tennessee educators, 22% of respondents indicated they planned to leave the public education field altogether.³

Paid parental leave will make local school districts more competitive in recruiting and retaining employees, since many major private sector employers already offer it.

- Based on available data, at least 20 major employers across the state—including FedEx,⁴ Dollar General,⁵ First Horizon,⁶ BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee,⁷ and Pilot Flying J⁸—provide some form of paid parental leave for their employees to care for a new child.

Paid parental leave is good for the economy.

- By keeping workers with caregiving needs attached to the workforce, paid parental leave decreases reliance on public assistance programs, creating taxpayer savings.
- Women who take paid leave after having a baby are more likely to be working 9 to 12 months after the birth than women who take no leave.⁹
- Women and men who return to work after a paid leave are significantly less likely to receive public assistance in the year after the birth of their child than parents who take no leave at all.¹⁰

Providing paid leave for both parents leads to healthy, strong families and supports adoptive parents.

- Paid parental leave supports adoptive parents by providing time to handle logistics and bond with a new child while easing the financial burden that often comes with adoption.¹¹
- When fathers take adequate paid parental leave, it greatly benefits new moms as well, leading to fewer postpartum health complications and improved mental health.¹²

Nearly 70% of Tennessee voters believe that state government should play a role in ensuring workers have access to paid family leave and paid sick days.¹³

¹ Gov. Kemp Signs Bill to Provide Paid Parental Leave for State Employees, *Office of Governor Brian Kemp*, May 5, 2021, <https://gov.georgia.gov/press-releases/2021-05-05/gov-kemp-signs-bill-provide-paid-parental-leave-state-employees>.

² Eileen Appelbaum and Ruth Milkman, *Leaves that Pay: Employer and Worker Experiences with Paid Family Leave in California*, <http://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

³ Tennessee's public school systems look for creative solutions to teacher shortages, *Tennessee Lookout*, Aug. 24, 2022, <https://tennesseelookout.com/2022/08/24/tennessees-public-school-systems-look-for-creative-solutions-to-teacher-shortages/>.

⁴ FedEx Logistics Benefits, <https://careers.fedex.com/logistics-why-fedex>.

⁵ Dollar General Announces Paid Parental Leave and Adoption Assistance Benefit, March 8, 2018, <https://newscenter.dollargeneral.com/news/dollar-general-announces-paid-parental-leave-and-adoption-assistance-benefit.htm>.

⁶ Michelle Corbet, First Tennessee expands significantly its maternity/parental leave benefit, *Memphis Business Journal*, Aug. 9, 2016, <https://www.bizjournals.com/memphis/news/2016/08/03/first-tennessee-expands-significantly-its.html>.

⁷ Jesse Thompson, Why BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee offers paid parental leave benefits to employees, *The Tennessean*, Jul. 11, 2018, <https://www.tennessean.com/story/sponsor-story/top-workplaces-nashville-2018/2018/07/11/why-bluecross-blueshield-tennessee-offers-paid-parental-leave-benefits-employees/776847002/>.

⁸ Pilot Flying J Announces Family-Friendly Parental Leave for All Team Members, *PR Newswire*, Nov. 7, 2019, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/pilot-flying-j-announces-family-friendly-parental-leave-for-all-team-members-300953971.html>.

⁹ Linda Houser & Thomas Vartanian, *Pay Matters: The Positive Economic Impacts of Paid Family Leave for Families, Businesses and the Public*, Center for Women and Work (2012), p. 6-7, <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/other/pay-matters.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ Adoption Friendly Benefits in the Workplace: It is the Right Thing to Do, National Council For Adoption, July 1, 2018, <https://adoptioncouncil.org/publications/adoption-advocate-no-121/>.

¹² When Dad Can Stay Home: Fathers' Workplace Flexibility And Maternal Health, National Bureau of Economic Research, October 2019, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25902/w25902.pdf.

¹³ Multi-State Poll: Tennessee Findings, State Innovation Exchange, July 2020, p. 13, https://stateinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/TSPolling_TN_Six_Deck_d4_2020.09.16.pdf.