

NJ Expands Paid Family Leave to Cover Coronavirus

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New Jersey employees can now receive paid family leave and temporary disability benefits to provide income during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Assembly passed the expansion yesterday in its first remote voting session, and Gov. Phil Murphy signed it shortly thereafter. The bill, S-2304 (Sumter, D-35), passed the Senate last week.

The current family leave program is capable of providing up to 85% of wages with a cap of \$859. The expanded bill would make the benefits available to people who have to self-quarantine or care for loved ones because of COVID-19. The law also expands New Jersey's paid sick leave law, which is provided by the employer not the state, to permit the use of earned sick time for isolation or quarantine as a result of suspected exposure to a communicable disease, or to care for a family member under recommended or ordered isolation or quarantine.

"With this new law, we are providing hardworking men and women with the protections that they deserve and ensuring a healthier place to live and work," Murphy said.

"The coronavirus pandemic is creating healthcare challenges with economic consequences for workers and their families that are likely to become worse," said Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3), who authored the original Paid Family Leave Law. "We must work together to be resourceful, responsive and proactive at a time when so many people are experiencing hardship due to the pandemic."

The Assembly also passed four additional coronavirus-related measures yesterday, which now move to the Senate. They are:

- A-3901 (Chiaravalloti, D-31), which permits professional and occupational licensing boards to reactivate licensure of certain individuals during state of emergency or public health emergency;
- A-3902 (Wimberly, D-35), which permits extension of certain deadlines applicable to local government units under emergency circumstances;

- A-3903 (Downey, D-11), which allows remote notarial acts during a Public Health Emergency and State of Emergency declared by Governor in Executive Order 103 of 2020; and
- A-3904 (Burzichelli, D-3), which permits use of virtual or remote instruction to meet minimum 180-day school year requirement under certain circumstances.

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