



September 9, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 654 (Jackson) Unlawful employment practice: parental leave
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Governor Brown:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing 5,000 primary care and subspecialty pediatricians statewide, strongly supports SB 654 (Jackson). This bill would prohibit an employer from refusing an employee with at least twelve months of service to take up to six weeks of parental leave, and further prohibit that employee from being barred from coverage by a group health plan.

California lags behind six states (Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Oregon and Washington) and the District of Columbia in ensuring job-protected parental leave. Currently, in California only employees who work for a large employer (fifty or more employees) have a right to take job-protected time off to bond with a new child.

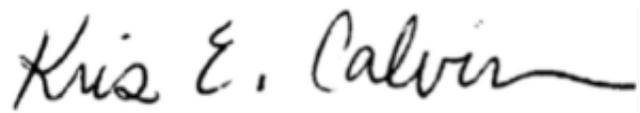
Despite the fact they contribute to the state's Paid Family Leave Program through payroll deductions, employees who work for a small employer have no right to job-protected leave and can be fired for taking time off to care for a new child. Individuals who are ineligible for paid family leave under existing law are often less educated, earn lower wages, and are more vulnerable to termination. A 2011 field poll found 40% of employees eligible for paid family leave do not utilize it for fear of job loss or retaliation.

Research shows that early physical contact and bonding between a parent and their newborn is extremely beneficial to the healthy development of that child.

The National AAP recommends infants be at least twelve weeks old before being enrolled in child care due to rapid developmental changes and the increased risk of developing severe undetected illnesses. Parental leave is thus associated with improved maternal health, birth outcomes, and healthy children.

Pediatricians, therefore, respectfully urge you to sign SB 654 and thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kris E. Calvin in black ink.

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Stuart Cohen, AAP-CA Chair; Lydia Bourne, AAP-CA Legislative Advocate; AAP-CA Leadership