



March 11, 2019

Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez, Chair
Public Employment and Retirement Committee
Legislative Office Building
1020 N Street, Room 153
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 372 (Voepel): State employees: Infant at Work programs.
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Assembly Member Rodriguez:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, strongly supports proposed legislation AB 372 (Voepel) authorizing state agencies to adopt an Infant at Work program allowing an employee of the agency who is a new parent or caregiver to bring their infant to the workplace.

Current law establishes new parents' or caregivers' rights to up to 12 weeks of leave in the year following the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child, allowing many parents to spend valuable time with their child in the early stages of infant development. Extensive research has shown this time to be beneficial to the lifelong health and well-being of children. After 12 weeks have concluded, however, many parents must find childcare for their infant if they wish to remain in their job. This deprives the infant of the parent's presence during a critical developmental phase, while the high cost of childcare reduces the resources available to provide for the child's other needs. Moreover, parent-infant separation reduces the likelihood that the infant will be breastfed.

AB 372 (Voepel) would increase the options available to California parents by authorizing California state agencies to adopt an Infant at Work program, allowing parents to bring infants between 6 weeks and 6 months of age to work provided they have not yet begun to crawl and working conditions do not pose a hazard to the health of the infant. This could increase the amount of time that new parents could spend caring for the newborn in the first six months of life and improve health outcomes for the child, while also modeling the policy for other employers across the state.

Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support AB 372 (Voepel) and urge you to vote AYE. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,

Mona Patel, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
State Government Affairs Committee Co-Chair
American Academy of Pediatrics, California
cc: AAP-CA CEO Kris Calvin; AAP-CA Leadership; AAP-CA Advocate Lydia Bourne