

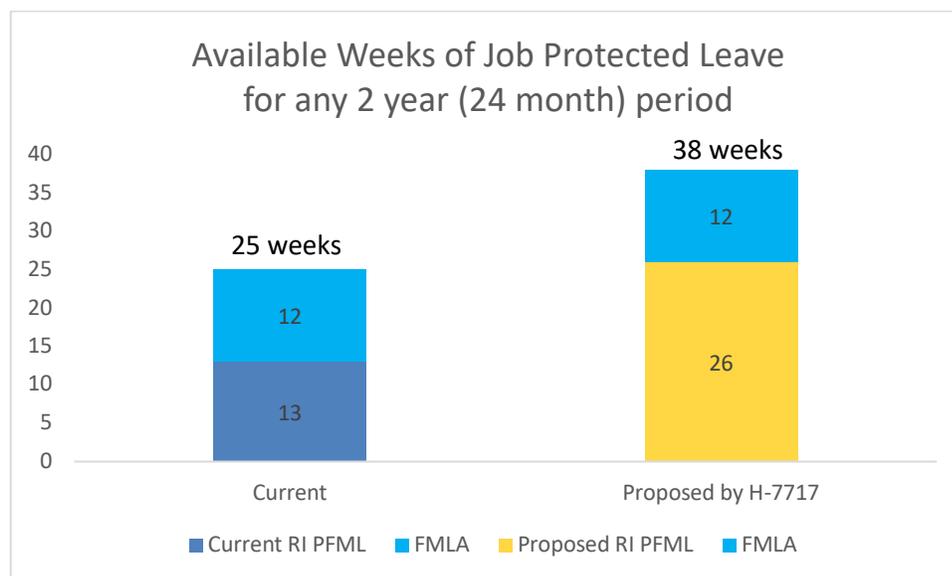
Testimony in Support of H-7717
 House Labor Committee
 April 7, 2022

The Economic Progress Institute writes in support of Representative Giraldo’s bill H-7717 which aims to update Rhode Island’s Parent and Family Medical Leave (PFML) law which ensures eligible workers have job protected leave to care for a new child or care for an ill family member.

Eligible workers include those who work full time (30+ hours a week) for an employer with 50+ employees, who have worked for that employer for 12 months. The employer must hold the employee’s job and maintain their health insurance, and can choose whether or not to pay them while they are on this leave. These PFML protections are separate from the Temporarily Caregiver Insurance (TCI) program, which also provides wage replacement while the worker is out on leave. The two types of leave must be taken concurrently (General Laws 28-41-35).

Current PFML law allows for up to 13 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave during any 24-month period. Federal Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) law provides 12 weeks in any 12-month period. Therefore, eligible workers in Rhode Island can take 25 weeks over two years (13 weeks under Rhode Island law in year one and 12 weeks under federal law in year two).

We believe the intent of this bill is to ensure that an eligible worker can have 26 weeks of job protected leave in a any 24 month period. The effect of this could be that a worker can take 26 months of leave in the first year and 12 months of federal leave in the 2nd year.



The pandemic has shown a stark light on workers’ needs to take time out of work to care for their family. Improving Rhode Island’s protections as proposed in this bill make sense, both for workers and employers. Families need time to care without fear of losing their jobs. And employers benefit from workers who are dedicated and return to work after time out. The cost of hiring a new person is much larger than maintaining a person’s job. We urge the committee to pass this bill.