

2024 Regular Session

SENATE STUDY REQUEST NO. 3

BY SENATOR JENKINS

A STUDY REQUEST

To request the Senate Committees on Education and Finance to study the feasibility of establishing state subsidized parental leave for K-12 educators.

WHEREAS, it is a well recognized fact that paid parental leave has positive health and economic benefits for educators and their families; and

WHEREAS, educators are the backbone of our society and teachers in many states, including Louisiana, have no guarantee of paid parental leave; and

WHEREAS, research shows that paid parental leave improves infant mortality rates, breastfeeding initiations and duration, and maternal mental health; and

WHEREAS, paid parental leave also supports adoptive parents by providing time to resolve logistical issues and bond with their new child while easing the financial burden that often comes with adoption; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that fathers who take paternity leave experience greater engagement in their child's life, which in turn has cognitive and developmental advantages for children; and

WHEREAS, research shows that paid family leave helps increase employee retention and decrease turnover, thereby reducing the state's cost for hiring and training; and

WHEREAS, without dedicated paid parental leave, educators often have no choice but to use sick or vacation days when a new child arrives, which reduces their earned paid leave for times when other family issues occur, such as doctor wellness appointments or child sickness; and

WHEREAS, several states have enacted paid parental leave policies for their educators including Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina and have discovered that such policies have resulted in twenty percent fewer women leaving their jobs in the first year after welcoming a child, and fifty percent fewer women leaving after five years; and

WHEREAS, in Louisiana, any proposed legislation to enact a similar program will result in an increase in state government expenditures and an impact on local expenditures; and

WHEREAS, the state fiscal impact is due to the requirement that the Louisiana Department of Education reimburse local education agencies for payments made to substitute employees while a permanent employee is on paid leave; and

WHEREAS, paid parental leave would provide many teachers and support staff the security that they will have a paycheck while they take the necessary personal time to recover from childbirth or care for their new child.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana requests that the Senate Committees on Education and Finance meet and function as a joint committee to study the feasibility of establishing state subsidized parental leave for K-12 educators.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Study Request shall be transmitted to the superintendent of the state Department of Education.