

Three Employee-Friendly Bills That May Be Affected By Upcoming Elections

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In the past few years, **Democratic** members of **Congress** have introduced several decidedly pro-employee bills, none of which have yet passed, but which may be impacted by the elections in November. Such bills were first introduced in the 113th Congress when Republicans controlled the House of Representatives and Democrats controlled the Senate. Versions of these bills were reintroduced in the 114th Congress, although Republicans control both the House and the Senate. The November election not only will decide the next President, but also may change the balance of power in both houses of Congress.

Healthy Families Act

- Would allow employees of an employer with 15 or more employees to earn 7 days of sick time per year after 60 days of employment.
- 113th Congress: Introduced to the House and Senate on March 20, 2013. Co-sponsored by 134 Democrats in the House and 23 Democrats in the Senate.
- 114th Congress: Introduced to the House and Senate on February 12, 2015. Co-sponsored by 145 Democrats in the House and 31 Democrats and 2 Independents in the Senate.

Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act

- Would create a trust fund within Social Security to collect fees and provide compensation to employees on FMLA.
- 113th Congress: Introduced to the House and Senate on December 12, 2013. Co-Sponsored by 101 Democrats in the House and 6 Democrats in the Senate.
- 114th Congress: Introduced to the House and Senate on March 18, 2015 with 134 Democrats co-sponsoring in the House and 20 Democrats and 1 Independent co-sponsoring in the Senate.

Family and Medical Leave Enhancement Act

- Most recent version of this Act would extend FMLA coverage to employees at worksites with 15-49 employees, including part-time workers. The Act would also protect (1) parental involvement leave to participate in school activities or programs for children or grandchildren and (2) parental involvement leave to care for routine medical needs including: (a) medical and dental appointments of an employee's spouse, child, or grandchild, and (b) needs related to elderly individuals, such as nursing and group home visits.
- A version of this bill has been introduced to Congress each session since 1997.
- The most recent version was introduced to the House on June 16, 2016 with 7 Democrats co-sponsoring.

Following the elections later this year, employers should be on the lookout for versions of these bills being reintroduced, potentially in a political climate where they have a stronger chance of passing.

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