Maternity Leave in the United States

You’re pregnant! Congratulations!! Now what? How will this great news affect my job? You’ve heard of all these horror stories of morning sickness; will this interfere with my job? Will my boss be understanding to my condition for nine months? If I’m to ill to preform my job duties will I be fired? And once the baby is born will I have a job position to come back to work with the same title and pay grade? These are a few questions someone may think of once they confirmed their pregnancy. Thankfully in 1978 the Federal law passed The Pregnancy Discrimination Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act. This Act protects the expecting mother from being fired because of her current medical condition.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for new parents. This allowed them a 12 week of unpaid maternity leave but in order to qualify for FMLA you must be on the job for at least a year and work 25hrs a week. Unfortunately, only 40% of women qualifies for FMLA, since this is the case it causes 25% of women to return to work within two weeks of giving birth. Today modern women from the ages of 28 to 40 isn’t ready to give up her career to have a child because of not have enough time to recover from the physical and mental distress from childbirth. This has caused the birth rate to drop tremendously; having to raise a child in American from birth to 18 years old is morn than $233,000 according to Agriculture Department. If you have a significant other to help you raise the child, it may cause one parent to stay home causing the household income to fall 10 percent from child birth to several months until the stay home parent goes back to work. And if you’re a single mother that drops by 42 percent from time of childbirth and would eventually force the mother to overall quit her job due to low funds.

There are two types of Maternity leave: Maternity disability &Medical leave this allows six to eight weeks leave due to you being unable to work due to the current medical condition. And Family Leave (FMLA) is the time you’ll spend taking care of the child. This leave is up to 12 weeks, regardless if homosexual partners, homosexual, or even adoptive parents. The 12 weeks starts at birth. In January 16, 2009 the regulations was updated to military family leave entitlements under the National Defense Authorizations Act for FY 2008.

Before 1978 there wasn’t any Federal or State laws protecting pregnant women jobs regardless if you worked in a corporate office or at a fast food restaurant. The U.S. only has three states with paid leave on a Federal level which is California, Rhode Island, and New Jersey. Everywhere else pregnant women may be covered by the state. A 178 countries has paid maternity leave on the Federal level. New Mother in Finland are entitled up to 3yrs of paid leave, Norwegian mothers gets up to 91 weeks, the U.K gets up to 39 weeks, and Canada gets up to a year. Having enough time to recover is necessary for new parents. An infant and toddlers requires a lot of hands-on attention to prepare them for the world.

Christopher Ingraham states “it’s bad for the economy: paid maternity leave is associated with better job performance and retention among mothers, increased family incomes, and increased economic growth.

Cited Webs

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<https://www.techrepublic.com/article/10-things-you-need-to-know-about-maternity-leave-in-the-us/>