

## FACT SHEET: FMLA IS NOT ENOUGH

### Why We Need More than Just the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is the first and only federal legislation written specifically to help workers meet the dual responsibilities of family and work. FMLA guarantees job-protected, unpaid leave for up to 12 weeks to care for a newborn or newly adopted child; care for a seriously ill child, parent or spouse; or recover from a serious illness. Since its implementation in 1993, FMLA has enabled more than 35 million workers to deal with health issues or family responsibilities without risking their jobs.

**But FMLA doesn't go far enough.** Today, many workers are responsible for the care of their extended or blended families, and the current law leaves many of them unprotected.

#### The definition of “family” under the Family and Medical Leave Act is too narrow and does not reflect the realities of North Carolina’s families.

- Families rely on grandparents, stepparents, in-laws, and siblings for caregiving.
- There are nearly 1.2 million *family caregivers* in North Carolina providing care to their elders, relatives with disabilities and children with chronic disease.
- Families provide at least 80% of all care services, and more than 100,000 NC grandparents are the primary caregivers for their grandchildren.
- North Carolina ranks 6th in the nation in the number of children under age 6 who have a grandparent who provides that child's primary care.
- Yet, care for a sibling, grandparent, grandchild, parent-in-law—anyone other than a child, parent or spouse—is not covered.

#### Providing expanded family and medical leave makes good sense for businesses.

- Nearly two-thirds of employers say that complying with the FMLA is very easy or somewhat easy, according to a recent survey.
- **Replacing an employee permanently, rather than providing leave, can cost as much as five times the employee’s yearly wages**, plus losses in productivity and employee morale. The costs of replacing an employee (advertising for, interviewing and training a new worker) is often far greater than the cost of providing short-term leave to retain existing employees. In a recent cost-benefit analysis of recent federal paid leave proposals, reduced turnover accounted for the majority of the expected savings.
- **Expanding family and medical leave would provide significant savings in reduced turnover.** Mothers who gave birth after the passage of the FMLA were more likely to return to the same employer and took less time away from paid employment than those who gave birth before the FMLA.

**Providing expanded family and medical leave is good for workers, good for businesses, and good for the economy. Working North Carolinians deserve access to job-protected medical leave to care for their families.**

NC Paid Leave  
Action Network

*FMLA is Not Enough*  
Fact Sheet

Learn more about  
the issue and sign  
up for our action  
network at:  
[ncfamiliescare.org](http://ncfamiliescare.org)