

# AN ACT RELATIVE TO BEREAVEMENT LEAVE (H.2189/S.1354)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Liz Miranda (Second Suffolk), Rep. Christopher Worrell (5th Suffolk), Rep. Sean Garballey (23rd Middlesex)  
Committee: Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development

When someone is impacted by the loss of a loved one, they often seek bereavement leave in order to take the time away from work necessary to grieve, coordinate affairs, and attend to the many logistical and emotional needs that arise in the aftermath of a loved one's death. Many in Massachusetts may be surprised to learn in their time of grief that they have no legal right to bereavement leave. Grief and loss is something that impacts all of us. **The time is now for Massachusetts to guarantee bereavement leave for all!**

## WHY BEREAVEMENT LEAVE?

- The loss of a loved one is the **most common traumatic event** to disrupt work and life.
- Taking time to grieve a loved one, and respond to affairs in the aftermath of a loss, should not come at the risk of losing one's job.
- The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), provides job and benefits protection for **56%** of the United States workforce; however, bereavement is not an eligible condition for both job or wage protection.
- Bereavement is not a sickness or a vacation, and employees should not be required to use up other benefit time after the death of a loved one.
- Bereavement leave is currently at the employer's discretion.

## WHO'S IMPACTED?

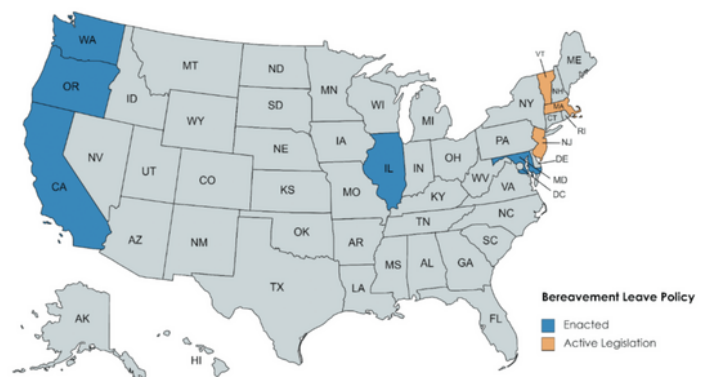
- Bereavement Leave is less likely to be granted to non-salaried workers and workers in the service industry. This disproportionately impacts low-income workers, workers of color, immigrants, and workers with low English proficiency.
- Hourly wage workers - who are less likely to receive benefits - make up **44%** of all workers aged 18-64.
- Low wage workers and non-salaried positions are disproportionately occupied by **women, people caring for children, and single parents.**
- Employees that work for small businesses are less likely to receive additional benefits.
- Guaranteed bereavement leave **benefits both** the employee and the employer.
- Families who experience traumatic loss and non-anticipated death are uniquely impacted.

## THIS BILL WOULD:

- Provide a right to 10 days of bereavement leave annually.
- Bereavement leave can be taken intermittently, giving employees the agency to use bereavement leave throughout the year as needs arise and grief fluctuates.
- Provide necessary job security for employees impacted by loss.
- Give employees the space to respond to their loved one's affairs and attend to the emotional impact of grief.
- Expand the definition of family, and who would qualify for bereavement leave after the loss of a loved one.
- Protect small business owners.

## FAST FACTS:

- **Five states** already provide legal bereavement leave protection. Massachusetts can join these leaders in protecting workers.



- Most companies have their own bereavement policies covering 1-3 days of leave. This is entirely up to the discretion of the employer, leaving inequitable discrepancies in regards to wage protection, number of days provided, or the right to leave entirely.
- Every year in Massachusetts, over **60,000** people die, leaving hundreds of thousands of people navigating some of life's most challenging moments without the right to guaranteed leave.

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