



February 15, 2017

The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson  
c/o Lisa Gardiner, Chief of Staff (Lisa.Gardiner@sen.ca.gov)  
State Capitol, Room 2032  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 63 (Jackson)  
Expanding Job Protection to Caregivers – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Jackson,

On behalf of the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), I write in support of Senate Bill (SB) 63. CLASP is a national organization that works to improve the lives of low-income people by developing and advocating for federal, state, and local policies that strengthen families and create pathways to education and work. CLASP has staff in California and works closely with partners throughout the state.

All parents, regardless of the size of their employer, need time to bond with their new babies. Yet, at present, the California Family Rights Act (CFRA) extends job-protected leave only to workers employed by firms with 50 or more employees. Workers' at smaller employers risk their jobs when they take the leave time that is essential to their children's healthy development. SB 63 will provide 12 weeks of job-protected leave to workers at businesses with 20-49 employees.

Ample research suggests that the first weeks and months of life have a significant impact on child development, with effects that last well into childhood and even adulthood. With sufficient time away from work, parents are more likely to take babies for well-care visits, which include vaccinations; bond with babies; and breastfeed for longer.

California has led the nation on work-family policies, passing the country's first Paid Family Leave law more than a decade ago. Yet many parents who work for smaller businesses are unable to use this paid leave because they fear losing their jobs. This is one reason for low take-up rates of California's PFL program. In fact, a 2011 field poll found that almost 2 out of 5 employees who were eligible to use PFL, but did not apply for the benefit, chose not to because they feared losing their job or other negative consequences at work. To maximize

the utility of California's groundbreaking PFL programs, all workers taking PFL need job protection.

Low-income Californians in particular cannot afford to risk their jobs in order to care for new babies. But no one should be forced to choose between their jobs and their families, regardless of income. This bill is an important step toward addressing inequities within our leave laws. We thank you for your important work in strengthening protections for working families.

CLASP urges all legislators to join you in supporting SB 63.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Ben-Ishai', written on a light-colored background.

Elizabeth Ben-Ishai, Ph.D.  
Senior Policy Analyst and  
California Coordinator