



The Associated Press-NORC  
Center for Public Affairs Research

# PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA: AWARENESS, SUPPORT, AND BARRIERS TO USE

The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, with funding from The SCAN Foundation, conducted a survey of adults age 40 and older, including an oversample of California residents, which measured awareness of and attitudes toward California's paid family leave program. The results show that over half of Californians age 40 and older are aware of the program. Once the program is explained, a large majority supports it, and most would be comfortable using the program to take care of a family member with a serious health condition.<sup>1</sup>

California is one of three states<sup>2, 3</sup> that allow employees to take time off to care for a family member with a serious health condition while receiving partial pay. Implemented in 2004 and paid for through employee payroll deductions, it allows for up to six weeks leave, taken all at once or in as little as one-day increments. The typical weekly benefit is 55 percent of a worker's weekly wage, up to a maximum of \$1,129 in 2016, and all private sector employers and some public employees are covered.

## **A MAJORITY OF CALIFORNIANS AGE 40 AND OLDER ARE AWARE OF THE STATE'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE PROGRAM.**

Fifty-five percent of Californians age 40 and older say they have heard of their state's paid family leave program. Forty-four percent say they have not heard of it.

- Those with experience with long-term care, either as a recipient, a caregiver, or by paying to provide care, are more likely to have heard of the program than those without experience (62 percent vs. 48 percent).
- Those with at least some post-high school education are more likely to be aware of the program than those with a high school degree or less (68 percent vs. 40 percent).

## **THREE-QUARTERS FAVOR THE PROGRAM, WITH THOSE AGE 40-64 PARTICULARLY SUPPORTIVE.**

Among all Californians age 40 and older, 75 percent say they favor the state's paid family leave program. Just 8 percent oppose it.

<sup>1</sup> Respondents in California were provided with the following description: "As you may know, some states, including California, allow residents to take up to four to six weeks off of work with pay in order to take care of a family member with a serious health condition. This family member can be a child, parent, spouse, or domestic partner, or in some states a grandparent, grandchild, sibling, or parent-in-law. Benefits are paid for by employee payroll deductions. The benefit is typically a portion of weekly salary."

<sup>2</sup> The other states that have such programs in place in 2016 are New Jersey and Rhode Island. Kaiser Family Foundation. 2014. Balancing on shaky ground: Women, work, and family health. *Data Note*. <http://files.kff.org/attachment/balancing-on-shaky-ground-women-work-and-family-health-data-note>

<sup>3</sup> New York State has also passed a bill to create a paid family leave program that will take effect in 2018.

National Partnership for Women and Families. 2016. State Paid Family Leave Insurance Laws. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/paid-leave/state-paid-family-leave-laws.pdf>

- Californians age 40-54 (81 percent) and those age 55-64 (77 percent) are more likely to support it than those age 65 and older (65 percent).

**MANY CALIFORNIANS AGE 40 AND OLDER SAY THEY WOULD BE COMFORTABLE TAKING TIME OFF UNDER THE PAID FAMILY LEAVE PROGRAM.**

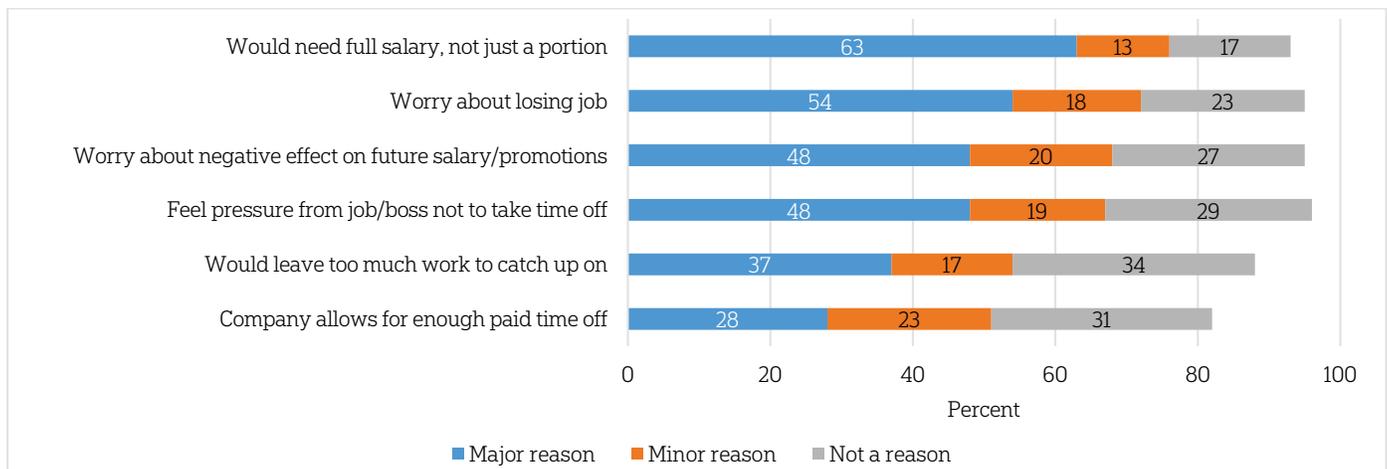
Among Californians age 40 and older who are employed but who are not self-employed, 63 percent say they would be very or extremely comfortable asking their employer for time off work under the state’s paid family leave program to take care of a family member with a serious health condition. Twenty percent say they would be somewhat comfortable, and 12 percent say they would be not too comfortable or not at all comfortable.

- Those who report excellent or very good health are more likely to say they would feel comfortable asking their employer for time off under this program than those who report fair or poor health (70 percent vs. 51 percent).

**AMONG THOSE LESS COMFORTABLE TAKING PAID LEAVE, CALIFORNIANS MOST OFTEN CITE THE NEED FOR THEIR FULL SALARY AND JOB SECURITY CONCERNS AS REASONS.**

Californians age 40 and older who are not entirely comfortable asking for time off under a paid family leave program cite several reasons as to why they might not use it. They most often say that they would need to receive their full salary, not just the portion of it they would receive while on leave. Sixty-three percent say that is a major reason they would not be comfortable using the program, and 13 percent say it is a minor reason. A majority also cites concerns about losing their job.

**The most frequently cited reason for feeling uncomfortable taking time off under a paid family leave program among Californians age 40 and older is the need for a full salary, not just a portion.**



**Question: Please tell me if each of the following is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason at all that you might feel uncomfortable asking your employer for time off work under this program. How about [ITEM]?**

**METHODOLOGY**

This survey was conducted via telephone with 1,698 adults age 40 and older nationwide by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research between the dates of February 18 through April 9, 2016. This analysis is based on an oversample of 526 residents of California. The overall margin of error was +/- 3.4 percentage points, including the design effect resulting from the complex sample design. The California sample’s margin of error was +/- 5.5 percentage points, also adjusted for the design effect. A full description of the methodology and topline with question wording is available at [www.longtermcarepoll.org](http://www.longtermcarepoll.org).