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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First in the South: Virginia Enacts Paid Family & Medical Leave

Richmond, VA — April 22, 2026 - Today, Governor Abigail D. Spanberger and the General Assembly passed landmark legislation establishing Virginia's new Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program. Beginning in 2028, the law will guarantee working Virginians the right to take up to twelve weeks of paid time off to welcome a child, care for a seriously ill loved one, or recover from their own serious health condition.

"This bill will deliver on Governor Spanberger's promise to make Virginia an affordable place to raise a family—and guarantees that no one will have to choose between caring for their loved ones and keeping their paychecks," said Jessica K. Looman, Virginia Secretary of Labor. "Virginia's economy is strongest when our workforce is healthy, secure, and supported. This law will help working families make ends meet, strengthen financial security, and provide employers with a consistent statewide framework that supports retention, workforce participation, and long-term economic stability."

What the new Paid Family and Medical Leave program will provide

Beginning in 2028, the PFML program will provide job protection and paid time off for life events, such as:

- Caring for a new child (birth, adoption, foster care)
- Recovering from a serious health condition
- Caring for a family member with a serious health condition
- Military family needs
- Domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking

The program will be administered by the Virginia Employment Commission. PFML will be funded by a small payroll contribution shared by covered employers and employees. VEC

will begin collecting contributions on April 1, 2028. Benefits will launch on December 1, 2028 and will [be widely available](#) to nearly all workers in the Commonwealth.

“The Virginia Employment Commission is proud to build and administer this program, ensuring Virginians have the support they need when it matters most,” said Melissa Smith, Commissioner of the Virginia Employment Commission. “During life’s most critical moments whether it is welcoming a child, caring for family, or managing a serious health condition—we are committed to standing with Virginians and delivering timely, reliable assistance.”

Additional details about program rollout, contribution rates and administrative guidance will be provided by VEC as the program is implemented.

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