



# Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street  
Chicago, IL 60611

## Legislation Text

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### **TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR BOARD MEETING OF APRIL 19, 2018**

#### **COMMITTEE ON PENSION, HUMAN RESOURCES AND CIVIL SERVICE**

Mr. David St. Pierre, Executive Director

Authority to amend employee leave benefits for non-represented employees to include paid parental leave

Dear Sir:

At the request of the Board of Commissioners, the Human Resources Department researched the addition of a paid parental leave policy to the District benefit program. According to a study conducted in 2017 by WorldatWork and Mercer, 38% of U.S. organizations now offer a paid parental leave benefit to full-time employees. The average length of the paid parental leave benefit for organizations surveyed is 4.1 weeks. In addition, several states including California, New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island have enacted laws that require employers to provide a paid parental leave benefit.

Several public agencies in the Chicago area offer a paid parental leave policy. The City of Chicago and Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) both offer a paid parental leave benefit to full time employees. The City of Chicago policy provides four (4) weeks paid leave to the birth mother (6 weeks for a surgical delivery) and two (2) weeks paid leave to a spouse or domestic partner of the birth mother. The CTA provides six (6) weeks paid leave to the birth mother (up to 2 additional weeks for a cesarean delivery) and two (2) weeks to the birth father, spouse or domestic partner. Both plans also provide two (2) weeks paid leave to an adoptive parent.

Based on the information collected in its review, the Human Resources Department recommends the addition of a paid parental leave policy. The goal of this policy would be to provide employees with time to care for and bond with their newborn or adopted child. The policy would provide non-represented, full-time employees with the following paid parental leave benefits:

- Up to six (6) weeks paid parental leave to a birth mother after delivery; or
- Up to two (2) weeks paid parental leave to a birth father; or
- Up to two (2) weeks paid parental leave to a spouse, domestic partner or civil union partner of the birth mother; or
- Up to two (2) weeks paid parental leave to an adoptive parent for the birth or placement of an adopted child.

The policy would require that an employee be eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to receive paid parental leave under this policy. Paid parental leave would be paid at 100% of the employee's regular pay for any time approved under this policy. A paid parental leave policy is not currently included in the collective bargaining agreements for represented employees. Implementation of such a policy would be subject to negotiation.

A review of the medical claim data shows that the District receives approximately 44 child birth claims each year. On average, 10 of these claims are related to an employee giving birth to a child, 29 of these claims are related to an employee's spouse giving birth to a child and the remaining five claims are related to a dependent giving birth to a child. Based on this data, the projected cost for the recommended paid leave

policy would be approximately \$230,000.00 per year. It should be noted that a significant portion of this expense would come in the form of lost productivity and not in additional salary expense.

Authorization is requested to add a paid parental leave policy as described above to the District benefits program for non-represented employees effective May 1, 2018.

Requested, Beverly K. Sanders, Director of Human Resources

Respectfully Submitted, Mariyana T. Spyropoulos, Chairman, Committee on Pension, Human Resources & Civil Service

Disposition of this agenda item will be documented in the official Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners for April 19, 2018