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Albany Passes Bereavement Leave Extension Bill at the End of Session, Business Groups Call for Immediate Veto

At the tail end of the 2018 New York State legislative session, a bill was passed at the 11th hour that focused on extended bereavement leave for employees. Specifically, the bill forces employers to offer their employees ten to twelve weeks of time off for bereavement. The bill covers the death of a spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, in-law, grandchild, or grandparent. It was introduced by Senator Funke (R-Batavia) and Assemblyman Joe Morelle (D-Rochester), passed both Houses, and now awaits signature into Law by Governor Cuomo.

Business groups such as MACNY are incredibly concerned over the unintended consequences from the bill as drafted. Essentially, the legislation as it is drafted authorizes virtually unlimited amounts of leave time for bereavement. While the issue of mourning the loss of a family member is of course one that business groups are empathetic to; the lack of restrictions, the vagueness of the parameters, coupled with the unpredictability that comes with the death of a loved one and in turn the time needed by an employee are all significant concerns being raised by the business community with this bill.

Bereavement leave is a benefit already provided by more than 90 percent of employers according to a 2018 SHRM survey conducted. According to the survey, typical bereavement leave is four paid days. As business owners and operators yourselves, you fully understand the importance of being there for your employee in their time of need and providing them with time off to mourn. The need for yet another government mandate put upon an employer, particularly in a sensitive area such as bereavement, is not only unnecessary, but will be another added burden to the State's employers.

MACNY and The Manufacturers Alliance of New York State have recently signed on to a coalition letter organized by the Business Council of New York State and will be sending letters of opposition to legislators, asking Governor Cuomo for an immediate veto of this bill. If you would like to stay up to date on our activity around this and other policy impacting manufacturers, please contact me at kburns@macny.org or 315.474.4201 ext 13.

Join Us! ★★

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