



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Thursday, May 31, 2001

MSG 2001-44

MEMORANDUM FOR: Human Resources Directors

FROM: Donald J. Windstead, Acting Associate Director for Workforce
Compensation and Performance

Subject: Survey on Parental Leave

As we discussed in a recent meeting of the Human Resources Management Council, we need your assistance in preparing a required report to Congress on parental leave. We request that you complete the attached "Survey on Parental Leave" by **July 15, 2001**.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has been directed by Congress to develop one or more alternative means for providing Federal employees with at least 6 weeks of paid parental leave in connection with the birth or adoption of a child (apart from any other paid leave). By September 30, 2001, OPM is required to report to Congress our recommendations and findings as to whether paid parental leave can be expected to

1. curtail the rate at which Federal employees are being lost to the private sector;
2. help the Government in its recruitment and retention efforts generally;
3. reduce turnover and replacement costs; and
4. contribute to parental involvement during a child's formative years.

To help us prepare this report, we need the views of the Federal HR community on

- (1) whether paid parental leave could be expected to help the Federal Government in its recruitment and retention efforts and
- (2) whether a new leave entitlement would make it more difficult for Federal agencies to accomplish their missions.

Please take a few minutes to share your knowledge and experience with us. We ask that you submit the requested information by email to Jo Ann Perrini, Chief, Pay and Leave Administration Division, at payleave@opm.gov. You may also submit the information by fax on (202) 606-0824. Please be assured that the views you express will not be attributed to you or the department or agency you represent without your permission.

Attachment

Survey on Parental Leave

1. Does your agency believe offering 6 weeks of paid parental leave for childbirth or adoption would reduce the number of employees who are leaving to work in the private sector?
2. Does your agency believe offering 6 weeks of paid parental leave for childbirth or adoption would improve its ability to recruit qualified personnel?
3. Are employees of your agency or candidates for employment citing the lack of paid parental leave as their reason for leaving or refusing Federal employment?
4. Do current Federal leave programs provide employees of your agency with sufficient paid time off for childbirth and adoption purposes? Employees may use various combinations of annual leave and sick leave for childbirth and adoption, as follows:
 - A birth mother may use her sick leave for periods of incapacitation resulting from pregnancy and childbirth.
 - A birth father may use his sick leave (up to a total of 12 weeks each year) to care for the birth mother during periods of incapacitation.
 - Birth parents may use annual leave to care for the newborn.
 - Under an agency's leave transfer/leave bank programs,
 - a birth mother may use donated annual leave for periods of incapacitation resulting from pregnancy and childbirth or to care for a newborn child who requires attention because of a medical emergency.
 - a birth father may use donated annual leave to care for the birth mother during periods of incapacitation or to care for a newborn child who requires attention because of a medical emergency.
 - Adoptive parents may use sick leave for purposes related to the adoption of a child. Adoptive parents also may use donated annual leave to care for an adopted child who requires attention because of a medical emergency.
 - Birth or adoptive parents may use up to 12 weeks of sick leave each year to care for a child with a serious health condition.
 - Under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), Federal employees are entitled to a total of up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for childbirth or adoption. Employees may substitute annual leave for unpaid leave for these purposes
5. Would providing 6 weeks of paid parental leave cause staffing problems or create other hardships in your agency? Please explain.
6. How might this new paid leave benefit affect your agency's competitiveness with private contractors--for example, when bidding against private contractors that do not offer 6 weeks of paid parental leave?
7. What alternatives can you recommend for providing Federal employees with 6 weeks of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child? For example:

- Permit employees to use sick leave to care for a healthy newborn or newly adopted child.
 - Permit employees to use donated annual leave to care for a healthy newborn or newly adopted child.
 - Permit employees to donate and receive sick leave under an agency's leave transfer and bank programs for the birth or adoption of a child.
 - Permit employees to substitute sick leave for unpaid leave under the FMLA to care for a healthy newborn or adopted child.
 - Permit agencies to advance 30 days of annual leave for birth or adoption purposes.
 - Establish a short-term disability program for birth and adoption purposes.
 - Credit new employees with xx amount of paid parental leave that may be used for birth and adoption purposes. Require employees to refund paid parental leave with accrued annual leave within a certain period of time.
 - Other. (Please specify.)
8. Please indicate the order of importance of the following in your agency's recruitment and/or retention efforts (#1 being most important, #10 being the least).
- Pay
 - Challenging work
 - Opportunities for training
 - Opportunities for advancement
 - Flexible work schedule/telecommuting arrangements
 - Paid time off for personal needs
 - Paid time off to care for a sick/injured family member
 - Paid parental leave for birth/adoption
 - Retirement benefits
 - Health benefits and life insurance
9. Other comments?