

Feb. 5, 2013

Small Businesses Overwhelmingly Support Family Medical Leave Act

Signed into law on Feb. 5, 1993, the Family Medical Leave Act allows eligible employees of covered employers to take a limited amount of unpaid, job-protected leave for certain family and medical reasons, and have their benefits maintained. Twenty years later, scientific opinion polling has found small businesses strongly support the decades-old law.

The law was passed with a commitment to accommodate the interests of employers and promote equal employment opportunity for men and women. Under the law's guidelines, reasons an eligible employee can take unpaid time off include: serious personal illness, the birth or adoption of a child, to care for a seriously ill family member or for qualifying reasons arising out of a family member being an active member of the military.

Small Business Majority's opinion polling of 507 small business owners from across the country reveals widespread support for the Family Medical Leave Act. Four out of five respondents favor the law, including close to half (46%) who strongly favor it. Just one in five oppose the law overall, and a mere 6% strongly oppose it. It's important to note the sample was majority Republican, with 51% of respondents identifying as Republican, 34% identifying as Democrats and 13% identifying as independent.

Main Findings

- **Four out of five entrepreneurs support the Family Medical Leave Act, including almost half who strongly favor it:**

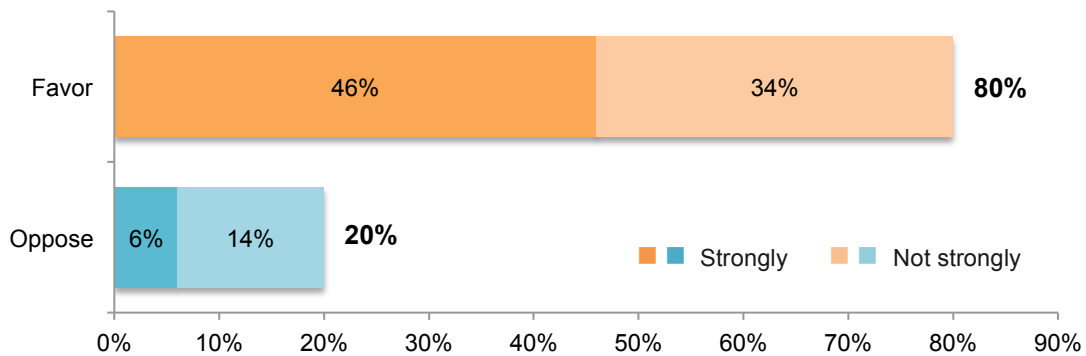
An 80% majority of small business owners favor the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993, which allows eligible employees of covered employers to take a limited amount of unpaid, job-protected leave for certain family and medical reasons. Close to half (46%) strongly favor it, compared to a mere 6% who strongly oppose the law.

- **Small business owners polled were politically diverse, with the majority identifying as Republican:**

Among the 507 small business owners surveyed, 51% identified as Republican, 34% identified as Democrats and 13% identified as independent.

■ **Figure 1: By a 4:1 ratio, entrepreneurs favor the Family Medical Leave Act**

As you may know, the 20-year anniversary of the Family and Medical Leave Act is coming up. Under the Act, eligible employees of covered employers can take a limited amount of unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons like a serious personal illness, the birth or adoption of a child, to care for a seriously ill family member, or for qualifying reasons arising out of a family member being an active member of the military. Would you say you generally FAVOR or OPPOSE the Family and Medical Leave Act?



Conclusion

Our opinion polling indicates that small business owners believe it’s important for employees who need to balance their work and family responsibilities to have reasonable options for doing so—options that also serve the interests of employers. The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 was designed to accommodate employers’ needs while providing ways for employees to take care of specified family medical issues that require time away from their jobs. By clearly specifying the instances in which a qualified employee can take unpaid time off, and outlining what qualifications deem an employee eligible, the Family Medical Leave Act creates a safety net for both employees and employers. With that in mind, it’s clear why the vast majority of small business owners support the law.

Methodology

This Internet poll was conducted for Small Business Majority by Lake Research Partners from Jan. 24-Feb. 1, 2013. The national sample of 507 small business owners was taken from the Research Now Panel and has a margin of error of +/- 4.4%.

Poll Toplines

National online sample

Field dates: January 24-February 1, 2013

507 Small Business Owners (1-99 employees)

	TOTAL	3 - 9 EMPL	10 - 49 EMPL	50 - 99 EMPL
N=	507	205	202	100

1. As you may know, the 20-year anniversary of the Family and Medical Leave Act is coming up. Under the Act, eligible employees of covered employers can take a limited amount of unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons like a serious personal illness, the birth or adoption of a child, to care for a seriously ill family member, or for qualifying reasons arising out of a family member being an active member of the military. Would you say you generally FAVOR or OPPOSE the Family and Medical Leave Act?

Strongly favor	46	45	45	51
Not so strongly favor	34	31	40	32
Not so strongly oppose.....	14	20	7	13
Strongly oppose.....	6	5	8	4
Favor	80	75	84	83
Oppose.....	20	25	16	17

2. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or something else?

IF INDEPENDENT: Would you say that you lean more toward the Republicans or more toward the Democrats?

Republican.....	36	33	42	32
independent - lean Republican	15	17	14	12
Republican.....	51	50	56	44
independent	13	12	14	12
Democrat	34	34	29	41
independent - lean Democratic.....	9	10	8	10
Democrat	24	25	21	31
Other	2	3	1	3

3. What is your age?

18-24.....	0	0	1	0
25-29.....	2	1	3	5
30-34	5	3	3	11
35-39.....	8	7	6	11
40-44	9	6	8	16
45-49.....	14	10	19	12
50-54.....	17	19	18	13
55-59.....	18	21	19	11
60-64	17	20	14	18
65-69.....	5	7	4	3
70-74.....	3	5	2	1
75 and over	1	1	3	0

	TOTAL	3 - 9	10 - 49	50 - 99
N=	507	EMPL	EMPL	EMPL
		205	202	100

4. Are you male or female?

Male	71	70	72	71
Female	29	30	28	29

5. For statistical purposes only, which of these categories best describes the gross revenue of your business in 2012?

Less than \$100,000	8	13	5	5
\$100,000 to under \$250,000	17	24	13	9
\$250,000 to under \$500,000	15	22	7	15
\$500,000 to under \$1 million	15	22	10	10
\$1 million to under \$2 million	15	10	26	6
\$2 million or more	30	9	39	55

6. For how many years have you been the owner of your current business?

Less than 1 year	2	1	3	0
1-2 years.....	4	2	5	2
2-5 years	16	16	11	23
6-10 years	22	23	18	28
11-20 years.....	23	24	21	23
More than 20 years	34	32	41	24

7. Region

Northeast.....	18	21	18	15
Midwest	23	23	25	21
South.....	35	36	34	37
West.....	23	21	23	28
New England	5	5	6	3
Middle Atlantic.....	13	16	11	12
East North Central	15	14	15	18
West North Central	8	9	10	3
South Atlantic.....	19	16	22	20
East South Central	5	8	3	4
West South Central	11	12	10	12
Mountain	7	4	9	9
Pacific	16	17	14	19