



STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
BEFORE THE NEW MEXICO HOUSE COMMERCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE
SB 11 “PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT”

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Thank you, Chair Gallegos, Vice Chair Serrato, Ranking Member Hernandez, and members of the committee.

My name is Awesta Sarkash and I am the Public Policy Director for Small Business Majority, a national small business organization that empowers America’s diverse entrepreneurs to build a thriving and equitable economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss SB 11, which would create a state-run paid family and medical leave program. We urge you to swiftly pass this legislation to support New Mexico’s small businesses.

Small business owners want to offer their employees competitive benefits but cannot afford to do so. I’ve spoken with many small business owners in the state who struggle with workforce retention because they cannot afford to offer benefits to their employees. As such, these employees leave for larger businesses, sometimes in other states, undercutting our small businesses here in the Land of Enchantment.

Under this new legislation, the Department of Workforce Solutions would administer the Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Fund, which would be supported through small employee and employer contributions. The legislation, as written, allows employers with fewer than five employees to be exempt from paying the employer contribution while their employees contribute and have access to the program. What’s more, self-employed individuals will receive leave compensation payments directly from the Fund, which is essential as more and more individuals want to start their own business but are hesitant because they might not have access to critical benefits like paid family and medical leave.

Additionally, [our research](#) found strong support for proposals to provide partial wage replacement for paid medical leave and parental leave. Seventy-three percent of small business owners support providing access to paid medical leave and 67% support access to parental leave.

Passing SB 11 will bolster New Mexico’s economy by providing small business owners with access to the benefits they need to attract a robust workforce. We urge you and the other members of the committee to vote yes on SB 11 to create a paid family and medical leave program and support the small business community.

Thank you.