

# Governor Pritzker Signs Family Bereavement Leave Act Into Law

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CHICAGO — Governor JB Pritzker today signed the Family Bereavement Act, an amendment to the Child Bereavement Leave Act that expands leave time requirements to cover pregnancy loss, failed adoptions, unsuccessful reproductive procedures, and other diagnoses or events impacting pregnancy and fertility. SB3120 also mandates leave after the loss of family members previously not covered in the act. The bill was originally proposed and written by Kyra Jagodzinski, a sixteen-year-old volunteer for State Senator Melinda Bush (D-Grayslake).

“Illinoisans should have time to mourn and heal after an unimaginable loss like a miscarriage or stillbirth,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “There are no words to erase such immense grief, but today, we take action to ensure that our residents are given the support and grace they deserve. This bill would not have been possible without the advocacy of one of Senator Bush’s dedicated volunteers, Kyra Jagodzinski. Illinois is a better, more compassionate state because of your hard work.”

The Support Through Loss Act requires employers in the state to provide for two weeks of unpaid leave for employees who experience a miscarriage, an unsuccessful round of intrauterine insemination or other assisted reproductive procedure, a failed or non-finalized adoption match, a failed surrogacy agreement, a diagnosis affecting fertility, or a stillbirth. Employees can also utilize this time off to support a spouse or partner experiencing one of these losses.

The original Child Bereavement Leave Act, signed into law in 2016, allowed parents and guardians to take leave in the case of the loss of a biological or adopted child, a foster placement, or a stepchild. The amended act addresses the immense grief parents feel during pregnancy loss and failed adoptions, both of which are often under-recognized as traumatic events requiring time for recuperation and healing.

The act also requires employers to provide ten days of leave to employees attending the funeral of a covered family member, making arrangements necessitated by the death of a covered family member, or grieving the death of a covered family member. The bill expands the definition of a covered family member to include children, stepchildren, spouses, domestic partners, siblings, parents, parents-in-law, grandchildren, grandparents, or stepparents.

These provisions ensure employees across the state can take time to grieve before returning to work without fear of termination. The act also specifies that the employee does not have to identify which category of event they are taking leave for, even if they are required to provide documentation. The Department of Labor will provide forms for health care practitioners to verify the leave-inciting event without violating patient privacy.

“When we say we are one Illinois, we mean it. When an Illinois family faces the unspeakable grief of losing a loved one, we carry that sadness with them and we recognize there is no one definition of grief,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “By signing this legislation, Illinois is enacting compassionate policy that provides residents comfort and support for healing at a time when it is needed the most. I commend Kyra Jagodzinski for having the vision and the heart to be a caring advocate for others.”

“The emotional anguish suffered after a miscarriage or stillbirth is often debilitating,” said Senator Melinda Bush (D-Grayslake). “Returning to work sooner than they’d like leaves little room for grief, mourning and healing. I am proud to have passed this law alongside the help of a passionate, young teen who saw the need for change and pushed to make it happen.”

“Over my life, I watched as my parents struggled with the loss of family, and saw people close to me struggle with fertility challenges and pregnancy loss,” said Kyra Jagodzinski. “As a 17-year-old, I did my best to comfort them but found a system that left them without support. The Act provides Illinois residents with time to grieve the loss of immediate family members and to-be family members. I am grateful to have worked with a leader in our legislature, Senator Melinda Bush, attorney Ashley Stead, Governor Pritzker, and the Illinois Legislature to support our communities in their time of need.”

“Expanding bereavement leave to cover miscarriages, failed IVF procedures, failed adoptions, failed surrogacy agreements, the loss of a close family member and other similar losses is a vital step towards equality in Illinois,” said State Rep. Anna Moeller (D-Elgin). “All loving families are tragically impacted by the loss of a child or family member. This law will help deliver much-needed relief to workers who are overcoming huge personal tragedies, and I thank Governor Pritzker for his support.”