

New Laws Taking Effect January 1st Expand Leave Rights

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SPRINGFIELD – Two laws taking effect January 1st, 2024, will expand leave rights for workers whose lives were impacted by violence.

“In the wake of tragic loss, the *last* thing on an Illinoisan’s mind should be whether or not their job will still be there when they’re ready to return to work,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Thanks to the amendments to the Victims’ Economic Security and Safety Act and the establishment of the Child Extended Bereavement Leave Act, Illinoisans can take the time and space they need to grieve and gather with loved ones without worrying

that their workplace will leave them behind in the process. This is a prime example of people affecting policy – and I couldn't be more grateful to Laura Kane for her advocacy in our Statehouse.”

“The loss of a loved one due to violence is a life-changing trauma. We have a responsibility to lead with empathy and compassion in the wake of such heartache,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “The Child Extended Bereavement Leave Act offers a crucial level of security to grieving families. This is a necessary step to ensure that all Illinoisans can focus on honoring their loved ones without fearing the added hardship of job loss.”

“When people in Illinois are experience tragedy at the hands of violence, their livelihood should be protected when they're most vulnerable,” said Illinois Department of Labor Director Jane Flanagan. “The amendments to the Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act and establishment of the Child Extended Bereavement Leave Act provide employees with some security in difficult, uncertain times.”

[Public Act 103-0314](#) amends the [Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act](#) (VESSA). The amendment to VESSA allows employees to take up to two weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave from work to attend a funeral, arrange a funeral, or grieve, if a family or household member is killed in a crime of violence.

Existing VESSA provisions allow unpaid time off for reasons including, but not limited to, medical attention, counseling, victim services, relocating, or participating in legal proceedings. VESSA applies to employers of all sizes.

[Public Act 103-0466](#) establishes the Child Extended Bereavement Leave Act (CEBLA). This provides job-protected, unpaid leave for parents who experience the loss of a child through suicide or homicide.

CEBLA was the initiative of a mother in Rockford, Laura Kane, [in memory of her son Zachary Birkholz](#). The bill was successful because of her advocacy at the state capitol.

Length of leave under CEBLA is determined on employer size:

- For employers of 50-249 employees: 6 weeks
- For employers of 250+ employees: 12 weeks
- Employers of fewer than 50 employees are not covered.