



Opinion Poll

Colorado small business owners support paid family and medical leave insurance program

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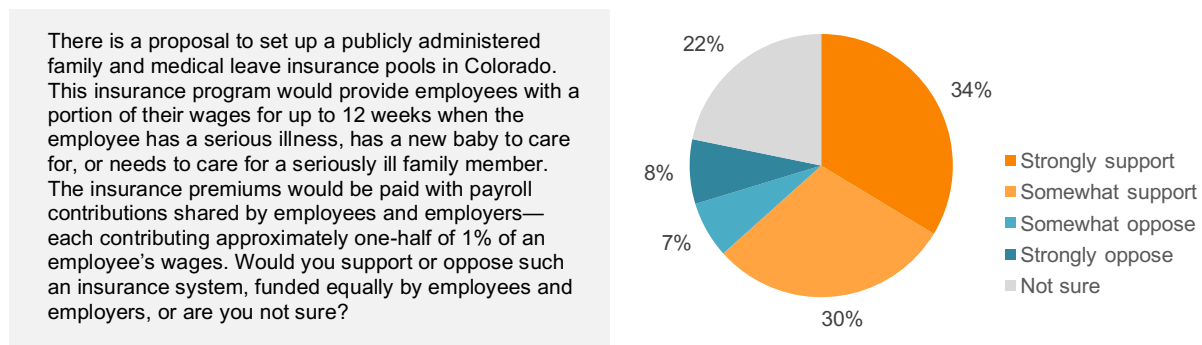
Executive Summary

The Colorado state legislature is considering a bill that would make Colorado the seventh state in the country to establish a program guaranteeing access to paid leave to care for a newborn child or a sick family member. Small business owners and their employees are particularly affected by the current lack of access to paid family leave as many small businesses can't afford to offer robust benefits, putting them at a disadvantage with their larger counterparts. Small business has been central to ongoing debates over the legislation, and new polling sheds light on their views on the proposal and their struggles to offer access to paid family and medical leave benefits.

The poll, conducted by Chesapeake Beach Consulting for Small Business Majority, found **nearly two-thirds of Colorado small business owners (64%) support establishing a publicly-administered family and medical leave insurance program in the state.** The poll was a survey of 300 Colorado small business owners with 2 to 50 employees conducted between March 11 and March 20, 2019.

The proposed insurance program would provide employees with a portion of their wages for up to 12 weeks when the employee has a serious illness, has a new baby to care for or needs to provide care for a seriously ill family member. The current proposal would be funded through insurance premiums paid from payroll contributions shared by employees and employers—each contributing approximately one half of 1% of an employee's wages. More than 1 in 3 respondents **strongly support** this proposal.

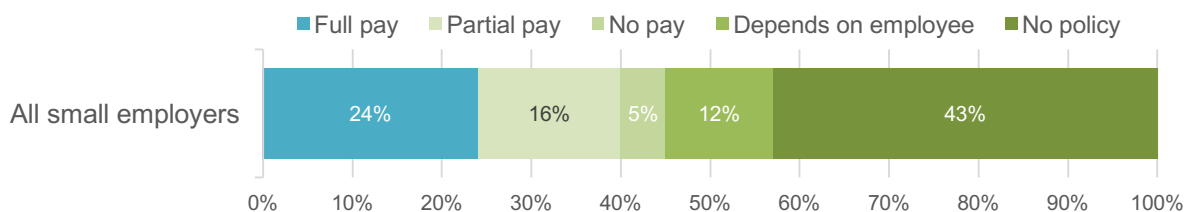
Figure 1: Colorado small business owners support proposed family and medical leave



Support for this proposal is strong across demographic groups. An equal number of men and women, 64% and 63% respectively, support the proposal. A 54% majority of the smallest businesses (those with 2-5 employees) support the proposed program, and support is high among restaurant (68%) and retail (75%) small business owners. Additionally, 58% of Republican or Republican-leaning respondents support the proposed program, revealing the proposal finds strong support across party lines.

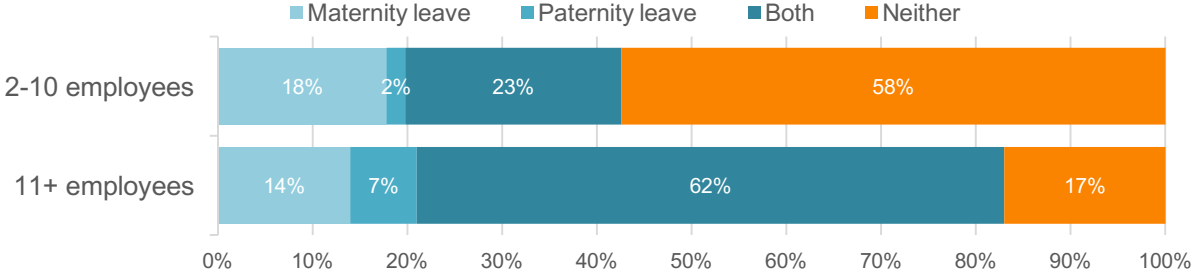
The poll also illustrates that many Colorado small business owners are struggling to offer family and medical leave to all employees and to offer full pay to those who are able to take leave. While 57% percent of all respondents say they offer access to maternity leave, paternity leave or both, **it's important to note that two-thirds of respondents currently offer only unpaid leave or partial pay or do not have any sort of parental leave policy.**

Figure 2: Majority only offer partial or no pay or do not have a parental leave policy



What’s more, 58% of businesses with 2-10 employees don't offer any type of leave, and these businesses comprise the majority of businesses in Colorado.

Figure 3: Smallest businesses in Colorado are unable to offer any type of leave



Additionally, only 4 in 10 of those that offer any form of parental leave offer full pay to those employees. Similarly, roughly half of respondents (49%) said they have a consistent or formal policy, whether written or unwritten, to provide family leave for employees to take care of family members with a serious illness.

Colorado small business owners are addressing their employees’ need to take extended family or medical leave on a day-to-day basis, but they are struggling to offer paid leave on their own. The legislature’s proposed legislation would address this need by offering uniform access to paid family and medical leave for workers in Colorado, and Colorado’s small businesses broadly support the creation of this program.

Additional poll findings

- **A majority of Colorado small business owners (56%) have had at least one employee take extended paid or unpaid family leave**, with roughly 1 in 10 reporting they’ve had many employees each year take an extended period of leave to care for a family member with a serious illness. When employees need to take leave for more than a week, most Colorado small business owners (54%) said they adjust by temporarily assigning work to other employees and 27% hire an outside temporary replacement.
- **Small businesses support the proposed family and medical leave program for a variety of reasons**, including that job-seekers are increasingly interested in applying to employers that provide family-friendly benefits and are evaluating employers based on the benefits they offer (38% **strongly agree**), and that they believe it’s the right thing to do because they care about the people who work for them (a near majority of 45% **strongly agree**).
- **Small business owners say a paid family medical leave program will help make them more competitive**. Respondents agree it’s costly to hire and train workers, and being unable to offer a robust benefits package is a problem small businesses face, so having a program like paid family and medical leave insurance would help small employers recruit and retain employees (more than one in three, 36%, **strongly agree**).

Methodology

This poll reflects a survey of 300 small business owners in Colorado with between 2 and 50 employees. The poll was an online and telephone survey conducted by Chesapeake Beach Consulting for Small Business Majority between March 11 and March 20, 2019. The margin of error is +/-5.8%.

Survey Toplines

300 Small Business Owners in Colorado
2-49 Employees

- 1. Please indicate your gender
 - Male.....45%
 - Female.....55%

- 2. With which race do you identify - white, black/African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, or some other race?
 - White/Caucasian70%
 - Black/African American9%
 - Latino/Hispanic.....8%
 - Asian/Pacific Islander4%
 - Native American1%
 - Other race.....2%
 - Mixed race.....5%
 - Decline to say1%

- 3. Just to confirm, are you the owner of a for-profit small business?
 - Yes100%

- 4. Approximately how many people work 30 or more hours per week at your company, including yourself? Please don't include contractors.
 - Two to Five.....47%
 - Six to Ten17%
 - Eleven to Fifteen5%
 - Sixteen to Twenty9%
 - Twenty-one to Twenty-five.....6%
 - Twenty-six to Thirty8%
 - Thirty-one to Thirty-five.....2%
 - Thirty-six to Forty.....3%
 - Forty-one to Forty-nine3%

- 5. Do you pay your employees through a salary or by the hour?
 - Hourly55%
 - Salary.....18%
 - Both, depends on the employee24%
 - Don't know3%

6. Which of the following categories best describes your business?

Construction	10%
Manufacturing	6%
Information Technology	10%
Real Estate	7%
Restaurant.....	14%
Retail	18%
Medical or legal services	8%
Other non-retail services	10%
Other - Please Specify	16%
Not sure.....	1%

7. And just to make sure we have a representative sample, could you please identify which of the following descriptions best fit your company? Please check all that apply. (Allow multiple responses)

Minority-Owned Business	24%
Woman-Owned Business.....	45%
Veteran-Owned Business.....	11%
None of the above	32%

8. Now thinking about your business, do you offer maternity leave, paternity leave, both, or neither? (If neither, skip to q10)

Maternity leave	17%
Paternity leave	4%
Both	37%
Neither	43%

9. Specifically for parental leave, do you now offer full pay to employees, partial pay, no pay, or does it depend on the employee?

Full pay.....	43%
Partial pay	28%
No pay	9%
Depends on employee.....	20%

10. The next question is just about family leave, meaning time an employee would take to care for a family member with a serious illness or caregiving need (such as if a spouse has cancer, or an aging relative who needs to be moved to a nursing home). It does not refer to sick days, parental leave, personal days or vacation days. (If do not offer this type of leave, skip to q12) As a business owner, do you:

Have a formal, written policy to provide family leave	23%
Have a consistent policy, but not written, to provide family leave.....	16%
Offer family leave to some employees on a case by case basis, but no formal policy	39%
Not offer this type of leave.....	21%
Other - Please specify	1%

11. Specifically for family leave (leave to care for a family member with a non-routine illness such as cancer or other serious caregiving need), do you offer full pay to employees, partial pay, no pay or does it depend on the employee?

Full pay.....	37%
Partial pay	21%
No pay	13%
Depends on employee.....	29%

12. Have you had employees who have taken extended (more than a week) paid or unpaid leave to care for a family member with a serious illness, or have you not? (*If never, skip to q14*)

Many employees each year	9%
A handful over the years	22%
At least one person.....	25%
Never	44%

13. When an employee takes leave for more than a week, you may have to get the work covered in different ways. As a business do you typically (if more than one, choose the approach you have used most often):

Assign work temporarily to other employees.....	54%
Hire an outside temporary replacement	27%
Hire a permanent replacement	8%
Put the work on hold until the employee returns from leave	5%
Have the employee perform some work while on leave	3%
Other - Please specify	2%

14. There is a proposal to set up a publicly administered family and medical leave insurance pools in Colorado. This insurance program would provide employees with a portion of their wages for up to 12 weeks when the employee has a serious illness, has a new baby to care for, or needs to care for a seriously ill family member. The insurance premiums would be paid with payroll contributions shared by employees and employers—each contributing approximately one-half of 1% of an employee’s wages. Would you support or oppose such an insurance system, funded equally by employees and employers, or are you not sure?

Strongly support	34%
Somewhat support.....	30%
Somewhat oppose	7%
Strongly oppose	8%
Not sure.....	22%
TOTAL SUPPORT	64%
TOTAL OPPOSE	15%

15. Now you are going to see a series of statements about paid family and medical leave. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each one on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree. You can use any number between 0 and 10.

Unpaid or paid leave is a financial strain on employers who have to deal with a worker's absence and the costs associated with it.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
6%	2%	4%	3%	8%	12%	10%	11%	14%	7%	20%	3%
Zero to Four..... 23%											
Five to Seven..... 34%											
Eight to Ten..... 41%											

Paid leave for all workers is a nice idea but small businesses like mine should be exempted from having to pay into it.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
8%	3%	4%	5%	8%	16%	8%	7%	10%	10%	20%	2%
Zero to Four..... 28%											
Five to Seven..... 30%											
Eight to Ten..... 39%											

Paid family and medical leave would hurt working women by deterring employers from hiring them by making them more expensive to hire than men.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
12%	5%	6%	8%	6%	11%	7%	9%	10%	8%	12%	5%
Zero to Four..... 37%											
Five to Seven..... 28%											
Eight to Ten..... 30%											

Paid family and medical leave should not be mandated by the government, but rather decided by employers and employees reaching a mutually beneficial agreement that works.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
6%	5%	3%	6%	3%	13%	4%	12%	10%	12%	23%	3%
Zero to Four..... 24%											
Five to Seven..... 29%											
Eight to Ten..... 45%											

There is just too much being asked of small businesses right now – tax increases, minimum wage increases– that a new paid leave program is just too much right now.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
6%	4%	5%	3%	6%	15%	9%	7%	10%	11%	20%	3%
Zero to Four..... 24%											
Five to Seven..... 31%											
Eight to Ten..... 41%											

It is a burden to set up the administration of the payroll deduction for paid family and medical leave.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
10%	5%	5%	8%	6%	15%	7%	10%	10%	8%	12%	3%
Zero to Four..... 34%											
Five to Seven..... 33%											
Eight to Ten..... 30%											

16. Next you will see a series of statements made about the family and medical leave insurance programs. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each one on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree. You can use any number between 0 and 10.

Family and medical leave insurance programs take the burden off businesses to provide employee benefits on their own.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
6%	2%	4%	5%	4%	17%	9%	16%	12%	6%	15%	4%
Zero to Four.....											20%
Five to Seven.....											43%
Eight to Ten.....											33%

Family and medical leave insurance programs give employees the financial security and job protection they need to be with their families and care for themselves without burdening employers' bottom lines or risking economic hardship and having to return to work prematurely.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
4%	2%	2%	3%	2%	16%	12%	14%	16%	7%	18%	3%
Zero to Four.....											13%
Five to Seven.....											42%
Eight to Ten.....											42%

Paid family and medical leave insurance is a modest, doable program, where everyone pays and everyone benefits.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
6%	4%	3%	2%	8%	16%	11%	15%	11%	9%	12%	4%
Zero to Four.....											22%
Five to Seven.....											42%
Eight to Ten.....											32%

It's costly to hire and train workers, and being unable to offer a robust benefit package is a problem small businesses face, so having a program like paid family and medical leave insurance is essential to helping small employers like mine recruit and retain employees.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
7%	2%	3%	4%	5%	13%	13%	16%	14%	9%	13%	2%
Zero to Four.....											20%
Five to Seven.....											42%
Eight to Ten.....											36%

Job-seekers are increasingly interested in applying to employers that provide family-friendly benefits and are evaluating employers based on the benefits they offer.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
4%	2%	2%	2%	5%	15%	13%	15%	12%	11%	14%	4%
Zero to Four.....											15%
Five to Seven.....											43%
Eight to Ten.....											38%

With family and medical leave insurance programs, workers are less likely to depend on public assistance and can better support their families during unexpected life events.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
3%	2%	3%	2%	4%	15%	12%	13%	15%	10%	17%	5%

Zero to Four **13%**

Five to Seven **40%**

Eight to Ten..... **42%**

As a small business owner, I support paid leave because I know it's the right thing to do – not just as an employer but as someone who cares about the people who work for me.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not sure
5%	2%	1%	4%	5%	14%	10%	11%	11%	13%	21%	3%

Zero to Four **16%**

Five to Seven **36%**

Eight to Ten..... **45%**

17. Sometimes in a survey like this, people change their minds. Again, there is a proposal to set up publicly administered family and medical leave insurance pools in Colorado. Typically, these insurance programs would provide employees with a portion of their wages for a limited number of weeks when the employee has a serious illness, has a new baby to care for, or needs to care for a seriously ill family member. The insurance premiums would be paid with payroll contributions shared by employees and employers—each contributing approximately one-half of 1% of an employee's wages. Would you support or oppose such an insurance system, funded equally by employees and employers, or are you not sure?

Strongly support33%

Somewhat support30%

Somewhat oppose5%

Strongly oppose10%

Not sure.....21%

TOTAL SUPPORT **63%**

TOTAL OPPOSE **15%**

18. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent or something else? *If Republican or Democrat:* Do you consider yourself a strong or a not-so-strong (Republican or Democrat)? *If independent:* Do you lean more towards the Republicans or more towards the Democrats?

Strong Democrat.....17%

Not-so-strong Democrat.....8%

Independent - lean Democrat.....12%

Independent.....18%

Independent - lean Republican9%

Not-so-strong Republican11%

Strong Republican16%

Other – Please specify1%

Not sure.....9%

TOTAL DEMOCRAT **37%**

TOTAL INDEPENDENT **18%**

TOTAL REPUBLICAN..... **35%**

19. What is your age?

18-24	12%
25-29	14%
30-34	14%
35-39	14%
40-44	9%
45-49	8%
50-54	8%
55-59	7%
60-64	4%
65-69	4%
70-74	1%
75 and over	3%
Refused.....	2%

20. For statistical purposes only, which of these categories best describes the gross revenue of your business in 2018?

Less than \$50,000	11%
\$50,000 to \$100,000	13%
\$100,000 to under \$250,000	25%
\$250,000 to under \$500,000	17%
\$500,000 to under \$1 million	13%
\$1 million to under \$2 million.....	11%
\$2 million or more	4%
Not sure.....	3%
Refused.....	3%

21. For how many years have you been the owner or business manager of your current business?

Less than 1 year	5%
1-2 years	17%
3-5 years	30%
6-10 years	24%
11-20 years	10%
More than 20 years	13%
Refused.....	1%