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Senate Finance Committee Recommends Comprehensive Paid Family and Medical Leave Bill

CONCORD - Today, two bills were heard by the Senate Finance Committee pertaining to paid leave. The first, HB 712, creates a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program and was voted ought to pass by the House of Representatives. It mirrors language in SB 1, which was vetoed by Governor Chris Sununu in 2019. HB 712 was recommended ought to pass in a vote of 4-1. SB 730, introduced by Senator Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro), maintains the status quo of voluntary paid leave. This bill, which is supported by Governor Sununu, does not include coverage for personal medical leave and would instead continue to leave New Hampshire workers unable to take time off to care for themselves. SB 730 was voted Interim Study in a vote of 4-1.

After the votes, Senate Majority Leader Dan Feltes (D-Concord) issued the following statement:

“No one should be forced to risk their family’s economic security simply to take care of a loved one, take care of oneself, or be there for a new baby. HB 712 creates a comprehensive, long term solution that works to attract and retain the workforce of tomorrow, combat the opioid epidemic, and care for our aging population. Instituting both paid family and medical leave is critical in creating a head on solution to the challenges facing working families across New Hampshire.

On the other side of the coin, we’ve been presented with SB 730 which, to be clear, would not establish paid family and medical leave. It would merely put into statute the current status quo-- businesses can already choose to provide paid leave for their employees. Voluntary paid leave is the law right now. The governor’s “proposal” gained zero testimony in support from the public. It fails to deliver access to paid leave for all employees, it discriminates against small businesses, and it does nothing to address the need of employees to take personal medical leave when faced with a cancer diagnosis or entering substance use disorder treatment. SB 730 is a facade in an election year that does not work towards better working conditions for Granite Staters.

I urge my colleagues to pass the comprehensive paid family and medical leave proposal outlined in HB 712 to institute a system that works for all Granite Staters.”

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