



e-Newsletter

Click on details of workplace rights, safety and health, and accessibility in the legislative branch

Paid Parental Leave in the Legislative Branch

The Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR) has posted on its website new detailed information on implementing the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA) in the legislative branch. FEPLA is a major enhancement of the federal compensation and benefits package. The Act amended the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to allow most civilian federal employees, including eligible employees in the legislative branch, to substitute up to 12 weeks of "paid parental leave" (PPL) for unpaid FMLA leave in connection with births or placements for adoption or foster care occurring on or after October 1, 2020.

PPL is defined as paid time off from a covered employee's scheduled tour of duty that is substituted for unpaid FMLA leave in connection with a birth or a placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care. The entitlement to PPL expires 12 months after the date of birth or the date of placement.

FEPLA includes provisions applicable to the legislative branch that both: (1) change the eligibility rules for employees to take protected leave for births or placements under the FMLA; and (2) permit employees to substitute PPL and other paid accrued leave for unpaid FMLA leave for such births or placements.

For more information on FEPLA and how the new law will be administered by the OCWR, including a [Questions and Answers](#) document, please visit the [Paid Parental Leave for Legislative Branch Employees](#) page on the OCWR website (ocwr.gov) or contact the OCWR at 202-724-9250 or by email at ocwrinfo@ocwr.gov. Confidential advising is available.



FY 2019 OCWR ANNUAL REPORT RELEASED

The OCWR has released its annual report, the [State of the Congressional Workplace](#), for 2019. According to the report, the enactment of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (CAA) Reform Act in December 2018 ushered in groundbreaking reforms. The CAA now extends certain workplace protections to unpaid staff and mandates training for employees on their workplace rights. In addition, the OCWR's dispute resolution process was significantly revised, and new statutory roles at the OCWR were created, including a confidential advisor who provides employees with information on their workplace rights and protections and who may assist in drafting a claim. The OCWR has also implemented innovative training programs to provide employees in the legislative branch with information on various workplace topics. For more information, go to ocwr.gov.

Annual Notification of Rights

The OCWR annually distributes a Notification of Rights to all covered legislative branch employees informing them of their workplace rights under the Congressional Accountability Act.

Download your copy of the notification, [Your Rights in the Congressional Workplace](#), at ocwr.gov.

Don't miss updates and keep in touch: [e-Alerts](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#)



YOUR RIGHTS

in the Congressional Workplace

The Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) applies employment, labor, safety and health, and accessibility rights and protections to covered employees of the legislative branch, including staff.

The Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR) administers a process to resolve claims alleging violations of these laws. Continued posting is available at ocwr.gov.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Unlawful Discrimination & Harassment Prohibits harassment and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, religion, age, or disability. (CAA, 5 U.S.C. 552) 2 Family & Medical Leave Provides rights and protections for employees needing leave for specified family and medical reasons. 3 Veterans & Servicemembers Protects employees who are past or present members of the uniformed services from discrimination or retaliation and provides certain benefits and employment rights. 4 Access The CAA also enhances access for eligible voters to the legislative and executive branch and establishes a redress system. (First release of employee rights are related. (CAA, 5 U.S.C. 552) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Retaliation Prohibits retaliation, reprisal, or discrimination against employees who exercise their rights under the CAA. (CAA, 5 U.S.C. 552) 6 Fair Labor Standards Requires minimum wage and overtime compensation for covered employees, restricts child labor, and prohibits unfair labor practices. (CAA, 5 U.S.C. 552) 7 Genetic Information Prohibits the use of genetic information or a basis for personnel actions. (CAA, 5 U.S.C. 552) 8 Mass Layoffs Requires advance notice and certain other protections if a mass layoff. (CAA, 5 U.S.C. 552) 9 Polygraph Testing Prohibits the use and the results of polygraph testing. (CAA, 5 U.S.C. 552)
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A claim alleging violation of the above laws must be filed with the OCWR within 180 days of the violation. Your claim passes a preliminary review by a hearing officer; you may request an administrative hearing in the workplace or before a hearing officer. Your claim must be filed in the workplace or with the OCWR. The OCWR will, at the request of covered employees, confidentially advise services for providing information, guidance, and assistance with drafting claims. Mediation is also available upon request at the expense of the parties.

The OCWR also enforces the laws below. Contact us to learn more.

- 10 Accessibility**
Prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities who are not denied access to public services and programs, including the workplace. (CAA, 5 U.S.C. 552)
- 11 Collective Bargaining & Representation**
Allows certain legislative branch employees the right to form, join, or assist a labor organization or to refrain from such activities. (CAA, 5 U.S.C. 552)
- 12 Hazard-Free Workplaces**
Requires employers to comply with occupational safety and health standards and to provide certain levels of safety and health. (CAA, 5 U.S.C. 552)

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