



DPC Issue Brief

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for Texans with disabilities.

Title: Employed Family Caregivers

Background: Texas employers should allow workers who are entitled to sick leave or other paid time off to use any or all of their sick leave or other paid time off for certain family members with serious medical conditions or disabilities. Support for family caregivers can help reduce the strain of care giving responsibilities, allow informal caregivers to remain in the workforce, and delay or prevent institutionalization of care recipients. Many family leave policies in the workplace do not provide enough flexibility and support for the unique needs of family caregivers.

1. There are an estimated 1.9 million informal caregivers in Texas who provide approximately 2.1 billion hours per year of care with a market value of \$18 billion¹.
2. There are 393,000 older adults and non-aged persons with disabilities in Texas living at or below 220% of the federal poverty level who need help with daily living, and receive all of their long term care from family and friends. If these individuals were instead to receive care in a nursing facility paid by Medicaid, the annual cost is estimated to range from \$2.7 billion to \$10.7 billion.²
3. More than 6 in 10 informal caregivers juggle work with caregiving responsibilities in order to meet both their own financial obligations and the cost of care for seriously ill loved ones.
4. 78% of informal caregivers have needed but not taken unpaid family or medical leave because they could not afford it – almost 10% of these were forced to go on public assistance while on leave.³
5. Paid family leave benefits reduce turnover and allow employers to avoid the cost of hiring and training new employees – 94% of employees who take family leave and receive full pay during that time return to the same employers. 76% of employees who take unpaid leave do not return.⁴

Recommendation: The Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) recommends that the Texas Legislature to amend the Texas Labor Code to include employee leave for family or medical obligations.

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MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: *Statewide Members:* Advocacy, Incorporated, Brain Injury Association of Texas, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, Epilepsy Coalition of Texas, The Institute for Disability Access/ADAPT, Lone Star Association for Persons in Supported Employment, Mental Health Association in Texas, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Texas, National Multiple Sclerosis Society of Texas, Texas Advocates, Texas AIDS Network, Texas Association of Centers for Independent Living, Texas Association of the Deaf, Texas Center for Disability Studies/ Texas Technology Access Project, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, Texas Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Texas Legal Services Center, Texas Mental Health Consumers, Texas State Independent Living Council, Texas State Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, The Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University, Council for Families for Children, United Cerebral Palsy of Texas, The Spina Bifida Association of Texas, Inc., and the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Texas. *Local Members:* Epilepsy Foundation Central & South Texas. REACH Resource Centers on Independent Living – Dallas, Fort Worth and Denton, Corpus Christi Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Goodwill of Central Texas and Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living

¹ National Conference of State Legislatures

² Legislative Budget Board Staff – January 2007; Texas Government Effectiveness and Efficiency report

³ National Partnership for Women and Families (2006) "Where Families matter: State Progress Toward Valuing America's Families"

⁴ Family Caregiver Alliance (2006) "Support for Working Caregivers"