

STATES OF JERSEY



EMPLOYMENT (JERSEY) LAW 2003: REVIEW OF PARENTAL LEAVE RIGHTS AMENDMENTS

Lodged au Greffe on 21st May 2019
by Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) to request the Minister for Social Security to conduct a full review of the ‘family-friendly’ elements of the Employment (Jersey) Law 2003 twelve months after the parental leave rights amendments outlined in the Draft Employment (Amendment No. 11) (Jersey) Law 201-(P.17/2019) have been implemented, and to consider bringing forward for debate recommendations to provide support (financial or otherwise) for any businesses which may have struggled to comply with the Law and families that may have struggled to access the rights set out in the Law;
- (b) to agree that the aforementioned review should include the following, but not be limited to –
 - (i) consultation with families, including an assessment of the impact on children and the extent of uptake by parents;
 - (ii) consultation with local businesses, including an assessment of impact on finances and supply of cover staff.

DEPUTY L.M.C. DOUBLET OF ST. SAVIOUR

REPORT

During the previous political term, the States Assembly voted overwhelmingly to take on the “1,001 Critical Days” initiative. This centres around the time from conception and the first 2 years of a child’s life. The latest manifesto can be found here:

https://www.1001criticaldays.co.uk/sites/default/files/1001%20days_oct16_1st.pdf

Research in this area shows how crucial a strong bond with a caregiver is to the physical, social and emotional health and well-being of a child. A healthy attachment in the early years can prevent so many problems from occurring further down the line.

The bottom line is, any ‘cost’ that is incurred to give children the best start is not a cost at all. It is paid off many, many times over the course of that child’s life into adulthood, and investing early will undoubtedly save the taxpayer costs in the long run.

These arguments were well-rehearsed and understood by the previous Assembly, and it is important that this logic is not forgotten. It is absolutely critical that this Assembly sees this through and approves [P.17/2019](#) to its fullest extent.

I do, however, understand the concerns that some small businesses have. These changes are very measured, given that only 6 weeks of the leave will be paid by the employer, with the rest being unpaid. But I have heard the worries that have been communicated to States Members, that some businesses are unsure of how these changes will affect them. Bearing in mind these concerns, I think that a firm date should be set whereby the Minister will review the impact of the new Law on businesses. As part of this review, we need to consider whether the States should be bearing more of the cost going forward, rather than the businesses. We should be supporting businesses so that they, in turn, can support their staff.

This work needs to be done. If this proposition is acceptable to Members, they should be able to confidently vote in favour of P.17/2019, knowing that in 12 months a full review will be carried out, and that the Minister will be considering what support businesses need.

Although my initial intention with this proposition was to review the impact on businesses, we do of course need to consider children and families. I have therefore included, within the scope of the review, an assessment of whether families are able to access the rights, given that most of the leave is unpaid.

Financial and manpower implications

I do not expect this to incur any additional unbudgeted costs, as the work will be carried out within the Social Security Department.