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Employer Leave Programs Help Employers Attract and Keep Top Talent

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Employers all over the country are closely examining their paid leave programs to ensure they can attract and retain top talent. According to a March 2017 study by the Pew Research Center:

- 82 percent of Americans say mothers should have paid maternity leave, and
- 69 percent say that fathers should have paid paternity leave.

Lawmakers—at all levels of government—are hearing the demands of their constituents, and this is leading to a patchwork of required paid leaves that vary by state and leave type. The federal government has introduced legislation to the Senate Finance Committee (The Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act, S.337) that would provide eligible workers up to 12 weeks of partial income replacement for qualifying events.

The Cleveland Chapter of Worldwide Employee Benefits Network (WEB) held a panel discussion to offer perspectives from the legal community, private employers, and leave consultants. The experts advised employers to adopt a universal policy that applies to everyone and complies with the most generous of the state laws in which the organization operates.

It's also important to understand the recordkeeping and notice requirements, because many jurisdictions require employers to provide sick leave balances on paychecks or at the employee's request. Fortunately, many payroll vendors can help with compliance issues on paid time off programs.

As employers implement new paid time off programs, including parental leave programs, they are discovering the importance of using change management practices to ensure success, such as:

- Analyze data to determine where leaves are currently taken to understand where cost and staffing burdens may exist.
- Work closely with managers to help them understand how the leaves support organizational culture and define options for managing staffing levels during leaves.
- Coach managers to ensure communications are consistent and that employees feel supported throughout the leave process.
- Develop communications that focus on the employee experience, including connections to other programs such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or wellness initiatives.

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