

# Labor Project *for* Working Families

Partnering  
with unions to  
put families first.

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Governor's Takes a Step Backward** *Work & Family Advocates Deplore Veto* *of Expanded Leave for Parents and Caregivers*

**Berkeley, CA** – Over the weekend, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed three bills that would have increased protections for California workers struggling to balance work and family responsibilities.

“We are deeply disappointed that the Governor has vetoed these family caregiving bills, which could have made a difference in the lives of thousands of families. Workers should not have to choose between caring for a sick loved one and keeping their job,” said Netsy Firestein, Executive Director of the Labor Project for Working Families, a leader in the statewide Work & Family Coalition which advocated for the bills.

Two of the bills, [SB 727](#) and [AB 537](#), would have expanded the definition of family member under California law, to include siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, and parent in-laws. These family members would then be eligible to take job-protected leave under the California Family Rights Act, and receive financial benefits under the Paid Family Leave Act. [AB 537](#) also would have allowed parents to take job-protected leave to care for adult children with a serious health condition.

The third bill, [SB 836](#), sought to protect employees from discrimination at work based on their familial status. Under current law, employers can refuse to promote or otherwise discriminate against workers who have young children or elderly parents, simply because the employer thinks the family responsibilities will take up too much of the employee's time.

Carina Barlow, who was not allowed to take time off work to care for her brother after his heart attack, said “How sad that the governor refuses to see how important it is to all Californians to be able to care for our loved ones when they need us.”

The three bills were hailed by work and family advocates as a significant development in the growing movement to help workers juggle the many demands of work, parenting, and caregiving. Over half of working Californians expect to need family or medical leave from work in the next five years. Workers in California have increasingly diverse

families, resulting in the need for time off to care for siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, and other close family members.

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*The **Labor Project for Working Families** is a national nonprofit advocacy and policy organization providing education, resources and technical assistance to unions on family issues in the workplace.*

*For the latest news, information, publications and resources on work and family issues visit our NEW and enriched website: [www.working-families.org](http://www.working-families.org).*