

**NEW DATA ON PAID FAMILY LEAVE**  
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The UCLA California Family Leave Research Project has conducted a series of surveys of California adults to assess public awareness of the state's new Paid Family Leave (PFL) program and the prevalence of leave-taking. This memo summarizes selected findings from a 2007 survey of 921 California adults, with selected comparisons to similar surveys conducted in 2005 and 2003.<sup>1</sup>

**\_ Public awareness of the new program is limited.**

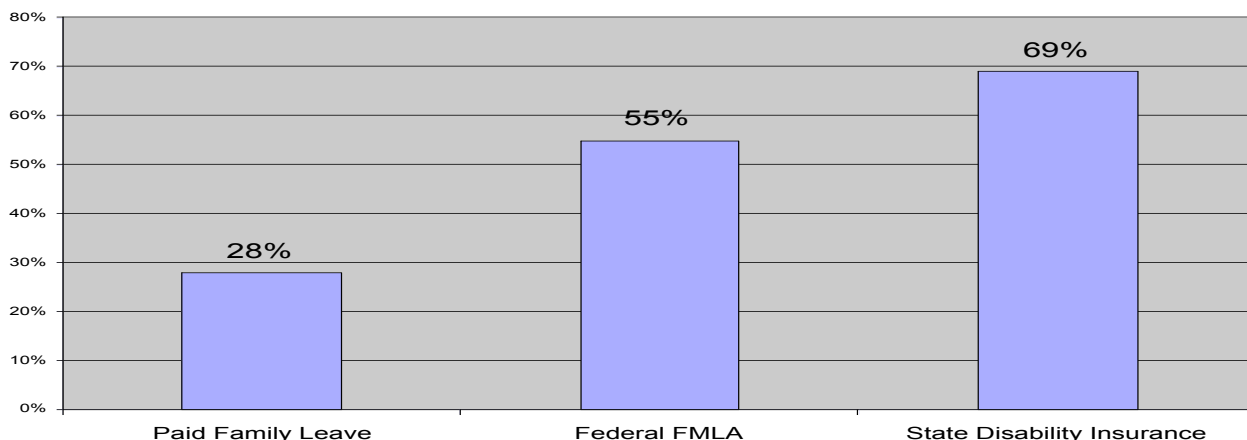
We have three data points regarding awareness of the state's PFL program:

- \_ In the fall of 2003, **22.0%** of adult Californians surveyed indicated that they were aware of the program.
- \_ By the summer of 2005, a year after the program went into effect, a somewhat higher proportion - **29.5%** - were aware of its existence.
- \_ In our most recent survey, conducted in the summer of 2007, the figure was slightly lower - **28.1%** - but the difference between 2005 and 2007 is not statistically significant.

In each of these three surveys, respondents were asked the same question (except that the dollar figure for the maximum benefit was adjusted over the years): "Have you seen, read or heard anything about a new California law that took effect in 2004, which provides up to 6 weeks of paid family leave for eligible workers at 55% of their weekly earnings, up to a maximum of \$882 per week?" It appears that awareness grew somewhat just after the PFL benefits became available, presumably because of the state's own effort to publicize the program, but now awareness has leveled off at a relatively low level.

As the graph below shows, awareness of the California PFL program is less widespread in the state's adult population than is awareness of related federal and state programs: in summer 2007, 55% of California adults surveyed were aware of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (roughly consistent with national figures), and 69% were aware of the state's long-established Disability Insurance program.

**Public Awareness of Paid Family Leave and Related Programs, California, Summer 2007**



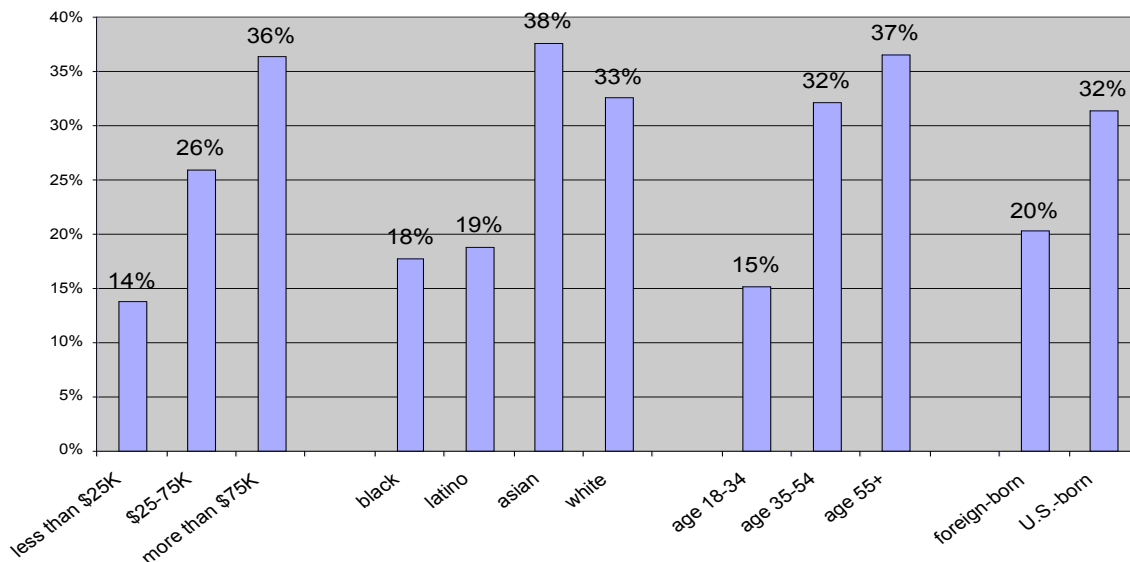
<sup>1</sup> *Source:* The survey data described here are from a Random Digit Dial residential telephone sample of California adults (in English and Spanish) conducted for the UCLA California Family Leave Research Project between April 30 and Sept. 2, 2007, as part of the 2007 Golden Bear Omnibus Survey administered by the UC Berkeley Survey Research Center. There were 921 completed interviews. Data were weighted to approximate the state's adult population and to control for the number of telephones per household. The earlier surveys were also conducted by the SRC and used a similar methodology, with similar sample sizes and many questions repeated across years.

Among those respondents who were aware of the state PFL program, there was a significant change from 2005 to 2007 in reported sources of information about its existence. In 2007, 45% indicated they had learned about the program from their employers, compared to 33% in 2005. In 2007, 45% indicated they had learned about it from the media, compared to 60% in 2005. This may reflect the fact that the 2005 survey was conducted during and immediately after the state EDD agency’s one-time publicity campaign about the program. It also highlights the concern that the program may be subsidizing those employers who coordinate their own leave benefits with state PFL benefits, while workers employed in settings where no benefits are available remain unaware of PFL.

**\_ Those who need the program most are least aware of its existence.**

All three surveys found that individuals in low-income households were less likely to be aware of the new program than their more affluent counterparts; that members of disadvantaged racial/ethnic groups were less likely to be aware of it than Whites and Asians; and that immigrants were less likely than the native-born to be aware of the program. Young workers also had markedly lower awareness levels than their older counterparts. This is of particular concern because, as previous research shows, low-income and other disadvantaged workers are far less likely than others to have access to employer-provided benefits like paid sick days, paid vacation, and disability insurance, all of which can help support leaves of the types covered by PFL.

**Awareness of PFL Program, by Household Income, Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Nativity, California, Summer 2007**



The survey also documented the continuing need for family and medical leaves among employed Californians, for reasons ranging from the employee’s own health to caring for a new child or a seriously ill family member.

**\_ Almost one in four employed respondents took a leave from work during the year preceding the 2007 survey. Over half received pay, and 96% returned to the same job.**

The survey found that 24% of employed respondents had taken a leave in the previous year. Of these, 32% went on leave to care for their own health, 27% to care for the health of a family member, 18% to care for a new child, and the rest for some other reason. Of these leave-takers, 60% received full or partial pay during their leaves. Fully 96% returned to the same job after their leave; 1% returned to work but to a different job.

**\_ A majority of employed respondents expect to need a leave from work in the next 5 years.**

Among currently or recently employed respondents to the 2007 survey, 61% said it was “somewhat likely” or “very likely” that they would need to take a family or medical leave from work in the next five years.