

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 14, 2019

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Sen. Looney Appoints Adrienne Cochrane to Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority

HARTFORD, CT - Today, **Senate President Pro Tempore Martin M. Looney (D-New Haven)** announced that he has appointed **YWCA Hartford Region Chief Executive Officer Adrienne Cochrane** to the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority.

Cochrane has served as the CEO of the YWCA in Hartford since 2018 where she is responsible for overseeing the organization's 150 employees and \$8.5 million budget. Prior to her work at the YWCA, Cochrane was President and CEO of the Urban League of Greater Hartford.

Cochrane received her B.S. in Political Science from Tuskagee University, her Masters of Education in Guidance, Counseling and Student Personnel Development from Tuskagee University, and her J.D. from Saint Louis University School of Law.

The appointment by the president pro tempore of the Senate must specifically be an individual who has personal knowledge and experience with economically distressed and underserved communities and is reflective of the ethnic and economic diversity of such communities.

"Adrienne has an incredible amount of experience working with urban communities in Connecticut and overseeing not-for-profit organizations," said Senator Looney. "Her knowledge and skills will be extraordinarily helpful in establishing a comprehensive and effective paid family and medical leave program for our state. As we launch this program Connecticut families can rest assured that they will have a champion in Adrienne."

"It is an honor to serve on the governing board and I thank Senator Looney for the opportunity and his leadership on such an important issue," said Cochrane. "I am proud to see Connecticut take the lead with one of the most generous paid family and medical leave acts and its inclusive definition of just what makes a family. More importantly, this landmark legislation supports working families. It provides a critical step in ensuring economic security, especially for women and their families, so no one has to choose between their job, their own health or the health of their family."

The Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority was established by Public Act No. 19-25, a priority of Senator Looney's for a number of years. The authority consists of fifteen members which include:

- The Labor Commissioner, or his or her designee
- The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or his or her designee
- The State Treasurer, or his or her designee
- The State Comptroller, or his or her designee

- The Commissioner of Administrative Services, or his or her designee
- The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, or his or her designee
- One appointment each by the speaker of the House of Representatives, the majority leader of the House of Representatives, the minority leader of the House of Representatives, the president pro tempore of the Senate, the majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate
- Three appointments by the Governor

The role of the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority is to establish and administer the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program. The details of the program include:

Length of Paid Leave

Connecticut employees will be eligible for 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave. If an employee experiences pregnancy-related serious health condition that results in incapacity then the employee would be eligible for 14 weeks.

Similarly, state programs in Massachusetts and Washington state provide 12 weeks of paid leave. Washington also provides an additional two weeks for serious pregnancy-related health conditions. However, in Massachusetts employees are eligible for 20 weeks of paid leave for their own serious health condition.

Reasons for Paid Leave

Connecticut employees would be able to use paid family and medical leave for five reasons:

1. Care for a new child (birth, adoption, foster)
2. Care for family member with serious health condition
3. Care for own serious health condition
4. Qualifying exigency arising out of family member being on active duty
5. To serve as an organ or bone marrow donor

New York, Washington state, and Massachusetts allow reasons one through four. Connecticut would be the only state in the country to allow for paid leave due to donating bone marrow or an organ.

Definition of Family Member

Connecticut's definition of a family member would align with that of New Jersey and include:

- Child
- Parent
- Spouse
- Domestic partner
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- Individual related to the employee by blood or affinity whose close association the employee shows to be the equivalent of those family relationships

Benefit Amount

Beginning January 1, 2022, the weekly benefit for Connecticut employees will be 95% of 40 times the minimum wage and 60% on earnings above the minimum wage. The maximum weekly benefit cannot exceed 60 times the minimum wage which is the equivalent of \$780 on a \$13 minimum wage, \$840 on a \$14 minimum wage, and \$900 on a \$15 minimum wage.

Connecticut's benefits align similarly with other states. In California the maximum weekly benefit is \$1,252, \$1,000 in the District of Columbia, and \$850 in Massachusetts.

Employees Covered

In Connecticut paid leave will apply to private sector employers with one or more employees. Self-employed employees and sole-proprietors have the ability to opt-in to the program. In addition, non-union state and local government employees are covered. Unionized workers will have the ability to collectively bargain and become covered.

Similarly all private sector employers are covered in state paid leave programs in California, the District of Columbia, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Washington state.

Program Funding

In Connecticut both personal disability leave and family care leave will be funded by the employee only. The withholding rate is 0.5 (one-half of one) percent on earnings up to the Social Security wage base.

For comparison, other states fund paid leave programs through either the employee only or a combination of the employee and the employer. In California, both personal disability and family care are funded by the employee only at one percent of a worker's first \$118,371 in wages. Additionally in Rhode Island, both personal disability and family care are funded by the employee only at 1.1 percent of a worker's first \$71,000 in wages.

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ABOUT THE YWCA HARTFORD REGION:

Established in 1867, YWCA Hartford Region is the third oldest affiliate of YWCA, a women's membership movement dedicated to **eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all**. YWCA Hartford Region provides programs and services in the greater Hartford area including early childhood education, supportive housing, teen leadership development, racial justice awareness, financial literacy, and economic empowerment. For more information, visit <https://www.ywcahartford.org> and follow us on [Facebook](#) , [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).