

SECURITY AND FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT (SAFE) ACT OF 2015 (H.R.3841/S. 2208)

YWCA believes that no one should have to choose between their livelihood and their health, their family, or their safety. Yet this is the reality for far too many women and families. Currently, workers can use the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to care for a sick or injured spouse, but cannot use it to seek protection from an abuser. This causes survivors to lose nearly eight million days of paid work each year, the equivalent of 32,000 full-time jobs. The SAFE Act allows survivors to take job protected safe leave to receive medical attention, seek legal assistance, attend court proceedings, and get help with safety planning. The SAFE Act also protects employees from being fired because they were harassed by their abuser, or sought assistance related to their abuse.

BACKGROUND

- Today, an individual can use the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to care for a sick or injured spouse, but cannot use it to seek protection from an abuser. This causes survivors to lose nearly eight million days of paid work each year, the equivalent of 32,000 full-time jobs.
- Only 33 states and the District of Columbia have laws that explicitly provide unemployment insurance to survivors of domestic violence under certain circumstances. In addition, only 17 states provide survivors with leave from work to go to court or to the doctor.
- According to the American Bar Association, approximately half of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors lose their jobs as a result of the violence. One significant reason for this job loss is missed days of work.

WHAT THE SAFE ACT DOES

- The SAFE Act allows survivors to take time off without penalty to make court appearances, seek legal assistance, and get help with safety planning for her-or-himself or immediate family members.
- To achieve this goal, the SAFE Act:
 - Allows a survivor to take up to 30 days off from work in a 12-month period, including seven days of paid time off consistent with the Healthy Families Act, to receive medical attention, seek legal assistance, attend court proceedings, and get help with safety planning;
 - Protects employees from being fired because they were harassed by their abuser, or sought assistance related to their abuse;
 - Requires employers to make reasonable safety precautions or job-related modifications if requested, unless doing so would impose an undue burden on the employer;

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- Ensures that survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking who have been separated from their employment as a result of such violence are eligible for unemployment insurance; and
- Invests in a national awareness campaign to encourage a culture of prevention and support for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE SAFE ACT

We ask that you co-sponsor the SAFE Act (H.R.3841/S.2208) and support the financial security of survivors of domestic violence.

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