

THE SECURITY AND FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT (SAFE) ACT OF 2017 (S. 2043/ H.R. 4198)

BACKGROUND

- **Economic security is crucial to survivors' safety**; however, violence negatively impacts survivors' ability to obtain and retain work. Survivors often need to take time off from work for court appearances or medical attention and abusers can actively interfere with or sabotage victims' employment.
- Survivors who are eligible for unpaid leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) cannot use that leave to seek protection from an abuser.
- Only 33 states and the District of Columbia have laws that explicitly provide unemployment insurance to survivors of domestic violence under certain circumstances.ⁱ Further, **only 17 states provide survivors with leave from work to go to court or to the doctor.**ⁱⁱ
- **Approximately half of domestic and sexual violence survivors lose their jobs as a result of the violence.**ⁱⁱⁱ
- While violence impacts all women and their ability to obtain and maintain economic independence, survivors of color face even greater financial consequences because they already experience lower wages, lower lifetime earnings, and other employment disparities.^{iv}

WHAT THE SECURITY AND FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT (SAFE) ACT DOES

- **Allows survivors to take up to 30 days off of work** to receive medical care, seek legal assistance, attend court proceedings, or get help with safety planning.
- **Protects survivors from being fired** because they were harassed by their abuser, obtained protective orders, participated in the justice process, or sought employer accommodations to increase workplace safety in response to domestic or sexual violence.
- Requires employers to make **reasonable safety precautions or job-related modifications** if requested unless doing so would impose an undue burden.
- Ensures that survivors of gender-based violence, who have been separated from their employment as a result of such violence, are eligible for **unemployment insurance**.

PLEASE COSPONSOR THE SECURITY AND FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT ACT

- The Security and Financial Empowerment (SAFE) Act takes positive steps to improve survivors' economic security.
- Job-protected leave and unemployment insurance help survivors obtain and maintain their safety. The SAFE Act directly addresses survivor's ability to take time for medical, legal, or safety needs, and to obtain unemployment insurance benefits.
- The SAFE Act protects survivors from being terminated for reasons related to the violence they have experienced and requires employers to take reasonable steps to protect survivors.

Please support survivors of gender-based violence by co-sponsoring the Security and Financial Empowerment (SAFE) Act of 2017 (S. 2043/H.R. 4198)

ⁱ Legal Momentum. (2014). Unemployment Insurance Benefits for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence. Retrieved 10 January 2017, from <https://www.legalmomentum.org/sites/default/files/reports/State%20Law%20GuideUnemp%20Ins%20for%20Victims%20of%20DV%20%26%20SA-7-14.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Legal Momentum (2015). Employment Rights for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence. Retrieved 10 January 2017, from <https://www.scribd.com/document/140852437/Employment-Rights-for-Victims-of-Domestic-or-Sexual-Violence>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control. (March 2015). Intimate Partner Violence: Consequences. Retrieved 10 January 2017, from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html>.

^{iv} x Center for American Progress. (April 2012). The Effects of Paid Family and Medical Leave on Employment Stability and Economic Security. Retrieved 10 January 2017, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/wpcontent/uploads/issues/2012/04/pdf/BousheyEmploymentLeave1.pdf>.