



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

April 28, 2015

Motion 14348

Proposed No. 2015-0102.3

Sponsors Dembowski, Hague and Gossett

1 A MOTION declaring that it is county policy to
2 establish a paid family leave program for King
3 County employees and directing the executive to
4 develop and transmit a work plan for implementing a
5 paid family leave program and a report on the costs
6 and benefits of implementing and providing a paid
7 family leave program.

8 WHEREAS, the United States is the only advanced industrialized country without
9 a national law providing new parents with access to at least partially paid family leave,
10 and

11 WHEREAS, the 1993 U.S. Family and Medical Leave Act requires firms
12 employing at least fifty persons to offer eligible workers twelve weeks of job-protected
13 unpaid time off work to care for newborn or newly adopted children, to care for a child,
14 spouse or parent with a serious health condition, or to care for themselves when they are
15 unable to work because of a serious health condition. However, a 2012 U.S. Department
16 of Labor survey found that the number of employees who reported needing leave but not
17 using it doubled since 2000. The most common reasons for not using leave were inability
18 to afford it, given by forty-six percent of the respondents, and fear of losing their jobs,
19 given by seventeen percent of respondents. Those who did not take needed leave were

20 more likely to be women, nonwhite, unmarried and earning less than thirty-five thousand
21 dollars annually, and

22 WHEREAS, an Institute for Women's Policy Research report for the U.S.
23 Department of Labor found that paid maternity leave can affect breastfeeding rates and
24 duration, reduce the risk of infant mortality and increase the likelihood of infants
25 receiving well-baby care and vaccinations. The same report found that fathers who take
26 time off from work around childbirth are more likely to spend more time with their
27 children in the months following their children's birth, which could reduce stress on the
28 family and contribute to father-infant bonding, and

29 WHEREAS, twelve weeks of paid parental leave is recommended by Zero to
30 Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families, and eighteen weeks of paid
31 maternity leave is recommended by the International Labour Organization, and

32 WHEREAS, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found in 2013 that sixty-four percent
33 of mothers with children under the age of six worked outside the home, and

34 WHEREAS, research by the National Institutes of Health in 2013 found that paid
35 maternity leave is correlated with an increase in the working hours of mothers with one-
36 to-three-year-old children, and, thus, with a likely increase in their earnings, and

37 WHEREAS, in January 2015, the King County women's advisory board issued a
38 report, entitled Improving Wage Equity and Promoting Family Friendly Workplace
39 Policies throughout King County, that recommended that King County offer paid family
40 leave to its employees, and

41 WHEREAS, according to a study of California's experience with paid family
42 leave, described in a book entitled "Unfinished Business: Paid Family Leave in California

43 and the Future of U.S. Work-Family Policy," by Ruth Milkman and Eileen Appelbaum,
44 the availability of paid family leave has led to an increase in the number of men taking
45 parental leave, which has the potential to reduce gender inequality in both the household
46 and the labor market, and

47 WHEREAS, King County seeks to become a model employer of the future, as
48 described in Attachment A to Motion 14129, entitled Creating the Employer of the Future
49 at King County, and family-friendly leave policies have been found to improve employee
50 recruitment and retention, which are key for the county's success in providing the highest
51 level of service to King County's residents, and

52 WHEREAS, increased employee retention would help King County avoid costs
53 associated with replacing employees, which the Center for American Progress estimates
54 at twenty-one percent of an employee's salary, and

55 WHEREAS, the cost of providing twelve weeks of paid parental leave to eligible
56 county employees has been estimated preliminarily by executive staff to be about \$4.46
57 million, and

58 WHEREAS, given the continuing, significant fiscal challenges facing King
59 County, the council will give strong consideration to meeting the costs of this new policy,
60 program and benefit through means that do not increase the financial expense or burden
61 to county government, and

62 WHEREAS, King County's general fund budget faces significant constraints,
63 requiring careful consideration of potential additional expenses in the budget, as well as a
64 continuous need to find savings, and

65 WHEREAS, paid parental leave has been shown to improve health outcomes for
66 infants and children, which may result in avoided healthcare costs for King County, and

67 WHEREAS, many of the reasons supporting paid parental leave apply also to
68 paid leave for an employee to address the employee's own serious health condition or the
69 serious health condition of the employee's child, parent, spouse or domestic partner, or
70 the child or parent of the employee's spouse or domestic partner;

71 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

72 A. It is the policy of the county to provide paid family leave, including paid
73 parental leave as described in this subsection. Paid parental leave should include,
74 beginning no later than January 1, 2016, barring exceptional burden, at least twelve
75 weeks of one-hundred-percent paid leave within a twelve-month period to eligible King
76 County employees following the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child. The
77 county should provide flexible scheduling as reasonably needed by employees who are
78 returning to work from paid parental leave. The implementation of this policy with
79 regard to represented county employees is subject to collective bargaining. The policy is
80 subject to the considerations listed in subsection B. of this motion. This motion shall not
81 be interpreted as conferring a right or benefit on any individual. It is intended that no
82 right or benefit shall be conferred unless and until an ordinance has been enacted
83 implementing the motion in whole or in part, and only to the extent that the ordinance
84 explicitly confers such a right or benefit.

85 B. The executive is requested to develop and transmit to the council: a work plan
86 for implementing a paid parental leave program as described in subsection A. of this
87 motion; a report on the estimated costs and benefits associated with implementing and

88 providing the leave program, including effects on employee recruitment and retention and
89 health outcomes of employees and their children; and the legislation necessary to
90 implement the leave program. In developing the work plan and the legislation, the
91 executive shall consider how paid parental leave aligns with other leaves within the
92 county and eligibility criteria. The work plan may include the costs and benefits of
93 offering up to sixteen weeks of paid parental leave, and may also provide the same
94 information for any other period of paid parental leave. Incremental increases may be
95 explored based on fiscal and administrative analysis. The work plan should include a
96 recommended means to pay for any additional costs associated with the parental leave
97 policy, which means may include: using existing resources; identified savings; a payroll
98 deduction; another option or options; or a combination thereof. Given the continuing,
99 significant fiscal challenges facing King County, the council will give strong
100 consideration to meeting the costs of this new policy, program and benefit through means
101 that do not increase the financial expense or burden to county government. If the
102 executive determines, after further analysis, that the cost of providing twelve weeks of
103 paid parental leave to eligible county employees is likely to materially exceed executive
104 staff's preliminary estimate, the council may find it necessary to reconsider the structure
105 or duration of a paid parental leave policy. If the executive determines that, due to
106 exceptional burden, the paid parental leave program provided for in subsection A. of this
107 motion cannot be implemented by January 1, 2016, the work plan should describe the
108 burden and identify the date on which the paid parental leave program will be
109 implemented. If the executive recommends a paid parental leave period different than

provided for in subsection A. of this motion, the work plan should describe the rationale for the recommendation, and the costs and benefits of the alternative option or options.

The executive should transmit the report on the estimated costs and benefits of paid parental leave by September 15, 2015, in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, the policy staff director and the lead staff for the transportation, economy and environment committee, or its successor. The work plan and proposed legislation concerning paid parental leave should be transmitted and distributed in the same manner by October 15, 2015, in order to be considered in conjunction with a supplemental appropriation ordinance.

C. The executive is requested to develop and transmit to the council: a work plan for implementing a paid family leave program that would provide leave for eligible county employees to address the employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of the employee's child, parent, spouse or domestic partner, or the child or parent of the employee's spouse or domestic partner; a report on the estimated costs and benefits associated with implementing and providing the program, including effects on employee recruitment and retention and health outcomes of employees and their families; and the legislation necessary to implement the program. In developing the work plan, report, and legislation, the executive shall consider how this benefit aligns with other leaves within the county and eligibility criteria. Given the continuing, significant fiscal challenges facing King County, the council will give strong consideration to meeting the costs of this new policy, program and benefit through means that do not increase the financial expense or burden to county government.

133 The executive should transmit by September 15, 2015, in the same manner
134 described in subsection B. of this motion, the cost-benefit analysis of the paid family
135 leave options. The work plan and proposed legislation concerning paid parental leave

136 should be transmitted and distributed in the same manner by October 15, 2015, in order
137 to be considered in conjunction with a supplemental appropriation ordinance.

138

Motion 14348 was introduced on 3/2/2015 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 4/27/2015, by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Hague, Ms. Lambert, Mr. McDermott and Mr. Dembowski

No: 0

Excused: 3 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Dunn and Mr. Upthegrove

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Larry Phillips, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: None