

More than 5,000 N.J. residents have received paid family leave so far

By [The Star-Ledger Continuous Sports Desk](#)

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ROCHELLE PARK – Gov. Jon Corzine today said more than 5,000 New Jerseyans have been granted [paid family leave](#) insurance to care for seriously ill family members and new or adopted babies since the program took effect over the summer.

“I know from personal experience how important it is for family members to be with and care for their loved ones in need,” Corzine said in a statement released by his office.



Robert Sciarrino/The Star-Ledger
A woman pushing a stroller stops to look at the "power of the onesie" display held up by members of MomsRising.org outside the Statehouse Annex in this 2007 file photo. The organization supported the state's paid family leave legislation, which took effect in July.

The state's family leave insurance program, the second in the nation, began providing workers up to six weeks of benefits starting July 1. To date, more than 5,000 family leave claims have been determined to be eligible. Of those, 4,368, or 81 percent, are for bonding with a newborn or newly adopted child and 1,040, or 19%, are claims for care of a seriously ill family member. Corzine signed the legislation in May.

Corzine made his comments during a round-table discussion with program benefit recipients at the home of Sheri A. Blands-Pearson, also a family leave claimant.

At the round-table, the governor listened to the personal stories shared by five women who have received the benefits for different reasons. For both Blands-Pearson and Jacqueline Correa of Ridgefield Park, the benefits enabled them to afford to take time away from work to bond with their newborn babies.

The program also made it possible for Laurie Geraghty of Roseland to care for her terminally ill son during the final stages of his illness. Beth Bell of Mine Hill relied on it when she needed to care for her ailing mother, and Jennifer Allen of Ridgewood needed time to care for her 6-year-old son.

“Thanks to Gov. Corzine and the Democratic Legislature, more than 5,000 New Jersey workers have received the peace of mind of knowing they didn’t have to decide between putting food on the table or caring for a sick family member or new child,” Assemblywoman Sheila Oliver (D-Essex) said in the statement. “Paid leave is among the most family-friendly policies we can provide New Jersey’s working families. We cannot be so inflexible as to prevent employees facing a family crisis from having access to a modest benefit that can keep them financially stable.”

New Jersey’s family leave insurance benefits are funded entirely by employee payroll deductions with a maximum annual employee contribution in 2009 of \$26.01, approximately 50 cents per week. Participating workers receive benefits equal to no more than two-thirds of their weekly pay, up to a maximum weekly benefit of \$546 in 2009.

More information on Family Leave Insurance is available at www.nj.gov/labor