

# LAWMAKERS CALL FOR THREE-MONTH DELAY IN PAID LEAVE LAW

More than four dozen lawmakers from both parties are urging legislative leaders to pass a bill delaying implementation of the state's new paid family and medical leave program by three months.

In a letter to House Speaker Robert DeLeo and Senate President Karen Spilka, the legislators said more time is needed so the state can finalize regulations and millions of employers and employees can be educated about the law's requirements.

"We fear that maintaining the July 1, 2019 launch date will result in an incomplete and unsuccessful launch of the program, an unfair proposition to those who have worked so hard to this point, and to millions of MA residents," the lawmakers wrote. "It is our belief that a three-month delay, rather than weakening or undercutting the law and its intentions, will strengthen it and ensure a smooth rollout with broad adoption by all impacted."

The first signatory on the letter is Rep. Joseph McKenna, a Webster Republican. Other signers include House Minority Leader Brad Jones, Speaker Pro Tempore Patricia Haddad, and Sens. Anne Gobi of Spencer, Michael Moore of Millbury, and Barry Finegold of Andover. McKenna said 52 lawmakers signed the letter by 5 p.m. on Monday and it will be delivered later on Tuesday.

Legislative leaders and Gov. Charlie Baker [have been discussing](#) the request to delay the law's implementation, which was [made on May 20](#) by a coalition of business and labor groups.

The fledgling Department of Family and Medical Leave plans to begin collecting a 0.63 percent payroll tax from employers July 1 to fund the estimated \$800 million paid family and medical leave program launched so workers can more easily take care of themselves and their families without facing financial crises.

Baker said Monday that the program, created by the 2018 "grand bargain" law he signed, is ready for its July launch.

"We've done the work to be ready. The systems are in place, the operating model is up," Baker said. The governor then added, "We've talked with these guys about it a bit over the course of the past few days. I'm expecting and anticipating that everybody knows that if we're going to do something about this, we probably need to do it this week."

The House plans a formal session on Wednesday and the Senate has a formal session scheduled for Thursday. -  
Michael P. Norton/SHNS

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