



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601**

**ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH
GOVERNOR**

February 13, 2007

Mr. Richard M. Brennan, Senior Regulatory Officer
Wage and Hour Division, Employment Standards Administration
U.S. Department of Labor, Room S-3502
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Mr. Brennan:

On behalf of hard working parents and guardians in Illinois, I am writing to express my support for the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and to strongly urge the U.S. Department of Labor to preserve the strength of this vital law. The FLMA is intended to make sure workers have some flexibility to deal with personal or family crises without fear of losing their jobs. The FMLA allows workers to take unpaid time off from work to deal with urgent events that could have a significant impact on their families' wellbeing and stability – from the birth of a new child to a family member's serious illness. Weakening that guarantee will harm families by adding to the uncertainty and stress of already difficult situations.

We strive to be a nation that values families. That means recognizing the importance of allowing parents or caretakers to place a priority on the needs of their families when urgent circumstances arise. But today, special interests are attempting to make it even more difficult for workers to take unpaid leave by tightening the restrictions for its use. Rather than questioning the protections the FMLA offers, the Department of Labor should look for ways to keep the law strong.

No one expects to need the protections of the FMLA, but we all know emergencies that require our full attention do occur. Please preserve the protections of the FMLA and ensure that workers will continue to have the right to put their families first. If changes are required, then those changes should be focused on updating the law so more workers are protected.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on FMLA. I'm sure we can both agree on the importance of this issue and the ripple effect it has on millions of working Americans and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rod Blagojevich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor