

election

by Vinnie John

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The 2020 presidential election is characterized by many unique things, including each party's proposals to provide paid leave for employees. The only difference is how much each party is willing to provide in paid leave. However, while politicians from different political affiliations are making proposals on what they will provide to the employees, who are the majority of the voters, employers, on the other hand, are concerned about the impact of such policy. With the kind of support that this policy has received from different politicians, employees will start enjoying the annual paid leave benefits from 2021.

At the beginning of 2020, when political temperatures in the country increased as campaigns took center stage in the American 2020 presidential election, it was clear that the candidates were willing to do everything possible to appeal to the voters. Joe Biden, the Democratic presidential candidate, has pledged to provide a 12 week annual paid leave for all workers for their own or when a family member is seriously ill. The Republican candidate, President Donald Trump, has also claimed that his administration has signed into law a 12 week annual paid leave for all employees. Other candidates who have also made the same pledges include Green candidate Howie Hawkins, who has proposed to sign into law a six-week paid annual vacation on top of the federal holidays.

It is clear that these changes will affect the two groups differently. First, the changes will positively impact the employees who will have to enjoy more benefits while their jobs are secure. Paid leave is important, especially for employees, because it gives them consideration as well as considers the changing American workforce. Even though there is a law already, the Family and Medical Leave Act, that needs the main employers to give their workers with 12-week unpaid leave, politicians proposed to change that part to include paid leave. This will

definitely increase the benefits of employees. Even though individual companies have taken responsibility for negotiating paid leave benefits with their employees, this has significantly remained low (Panoma, 2019).

However, for employers, this would not be good news because of the challenges involved. First, paid leave would create the most significant barriers for employers and their companies, especially in adopting the policy in the context of business impacts. According to Panoma (2019), a survey conducted in 2018 about human resources professionals showed that about 70% of the businesses do not provide their employees with the paid leave benefits due to its perceived threat. Paid leave will mean that the company will have to increase its operational costs, which may not translate to productivity in the end. According to Panoma (2019), this is the primary reason why most companies are hesitant to adopt the paid leave policy because they fear that it may not translate to productivity.

The proposals by the presidential candidates have increased the concern and worry of employers. Spitz and Bloom (2020) explain that the political factor is important in this election in regard to labor movement and policy changes due to the structure and organization of the labor system. For example, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), formed in 1935, is a federal agency that is largely influenced by the regime in power. According to the authors, the NLRB is an independent agency, but how the members are appointed makes it liable to policies that the regime in power proposes (Spitz & Bloom, 2020). For example, the president appoints the NLRB members, and the Senate confirms them in a five-year term (Spitz & Bloom, 2020). This means that they are directly responsible for the policies that the government creates. As such, employers are true to be worried and concerned about the proposals because if they are most likely to become true.

Furthermore, this issue's support across the political divide is enough to worry employers who are hesitant to adopt the policy due to cost issues. As Smith (2020) discusses, the issue of paid leave is not a question of "if" but rather a question of "when" because of the support that it has received among the political class. Earlier this year, President Trump commenced in law the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) that has proven employers are more likely to incur more costs to compensate their employees during their 12-week annual leave. However, the private sectors are set to feel the pinch more because they have been very hesitant in adopting this policy. The FFCRA that was signed this year was targeted at the private sector. Even though the private sector is also the sector that is badly hit by pandemics like the current Coronavirus, they are also set to lose more income in compensating their employees when they take their annual leaves. The much emphasis that presidential candidates in 2020 have shown in paid leave is a real threat to employers in private institutions.

However, it may not be bad as it is anticipated as it also presents other opportunities that would benefit both employees and their employers. It may change the employment models for many companies that will have to adopt a part-time workforce more than a full-time workforce. This will mean that employers will not be concerned about the annual leave, while employees will also get enough time to handle their personal businesses when they need to when working as a part-time employee. Some companies have already implemented this paid leave strategy, and it works for them. This means that the other hesitant companies can also work with it.

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