

**CHAPTER 82**  
**(CORRECTED COPY)**

**AN ACT** assisting victims of domestic or sexual violence and supplementing Title 34 of the Revised Statutes.

**BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

C.34:11C-1 Short title.

1. This act shall be known as the "New Jersey Security and Financial Empowerment Act" or "NJ SAFE Act."

C.34:11C-2 Definitions relative to victims of domestic, sexual violence.

2. As used in this act:

“Employee” means a person who is employed for at least 12 months by an employer, with respect to whom benefits are sought under this act, for not less than 1,000 base hours during the immediately preceding 12-month period; and

“Employer” means a person or corporation, partnership, individual proprietorship, joint venture, firm or company, or other similar legal entity which engages the services of an employee and employs 25 or more employees for each working day during each of 20 or more calendar workweeks in the then current or immediately preceding calendar year. “Employer” includes the State, any political subdivision thereof, and all public offices, agencies, boards, or bodies.

C.34:11C-3 Regulations relative to employees affected by domestic, sexual violence; definitions.

3. a. Any employee of an employer in the State who was a victim of an incident of domestic violence as defined in section 3 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-19) or a sexually violent offense as defined in section 3 of P.L.1998, c.71 (C.30:4-27.26), or whose child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner was a victim shall be entitled to unpaid leave of no more than 20 days in one 12-month period, to be used in the 12-month period next following any incident of domestic violence or any sexually violent offense as provided in this section. For purposes of this section, each incident of domestic violence or any sexually violent offense shall constitute a separate offense for which an employee is entitled to unpaid leave, provided that the employee has not exhausted the allotted 20 days for the 12-month period. The unpaid leave may be taken intermittently in intervals of no less than one day, as needed for the purpose of engaging in any of the following activities as they relate to the incident of domestic violence or sexually violent offense:

(1) seeking medical attention for, or recovering from, physical or psychological injuries caused by domestic or sexual violence to the employee or the employee’s child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner;

(2) obtaining services from a victim services organization for the employee or the employee’s child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner;

(3) obtaining psychological or other counseling for the employee or the employee’s child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner;

(4) participating in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocating, or taking other actions to increase the safety of the employee or the employee’s child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner from future domestic or sexual violence or to ensure economic security;

(5) seeking legal assistance or remedies to ensure the health and safety of the employee

P.L.2013, CHAPTER 82

or the employee's child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner, including preparing for, or participating in, any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or derived from domestic or sexual violence; or

(6) attending, participating in, or preparing for a criminal or civil court proceeding relating to an incident of domestic or sexual violence of which the employee or the employee's child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner, was a victim.

An eligible employee may elect, or an employer may require the employee, to use any of the accrued paid vacation leave, personal leave, or medical or sick leave of the employee during any part of the 20-day period of unpaid leave provided under this subsection. In such case, any paid leave provided by the employer, and accrued pursuant to established policies of the employer, shall run concurrently with the unpaid leave provided under this subsection and, accordingly, the employee shall receive pay pursuant to the employer's applicable paid leave policy during the period of otherwise unpaid leave. If an employee requests leave for a reason covered by both this subsection and the "Family Leave Act," P.L.1989, c.261 (C.34:11B-1 et seq.) or the federal "Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993," Pub.L.103-3 (29 U.S.C. s.2601 et seq.), the leave shall count simultaneously against the employee's entitlement under each respective law.

Leave granted under this section shall not conflict with any rights pursuant to the "Family Leave Act," P.L.1989, c.261 (C.34:11B-1 et seq.), the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law," P.L.1948, c.110 (C.43:21-25 et seq.), or the federal "Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993," Pub.L.103-3 (29 U.S.C. s.2601 et seq.).

b. Prior to taking the leave provided for in this section, an employee shall, if the necessity for the leave is foreseeable, provide the employer with written notice of the need for the leave. The notice shall be provided to the employer as far in advance as is reasonable and practical under the circumstances.

c. Nothing contained in this act shall be construed to prohibit an employer from requiring that a period of leave provided pursuant to this section be supported by the employee with documentation of the domestic violence or sexually violent offense which is the basis for the leave. If the employer requires the documentation, the employee shall be regarded as having provided sufficient documentation if the employee provides one or more of the following:

(1) a domestic violence restraining order or other documentation of equitable relief issued by a court of competent jurisdiction;

(2) a letter or other written documentation from the county or municipal prosecutor documenting the domestic violence or sexually violent offense;

(3) documentation of the conviction of a person for the domestic violence or sexually violent offense;

(4) medical documentation of the domestic violence or sexually violent offense;

(5) certification from a certified Domestic Violence Specialist or the director of a designated domestic violence agency or Rape Crisis Center, that the employee or employee's child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner is a victim of domestic violence or a sexually violent offense; or

(6) other documentation or certification of the domestic violence or sexually violent offense provided by a social worker, member of the clergy, shelter worker, or other professional who has assisted the employee or employee's child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner in dealing with the domestic violence or sexually violent offenses.

For the purposes of this subsection:

"Certified Domestic Violence Specialist" means a person who has fulfilled the

P.L.2013, CHAPTER 82

requirements of certification as a Domestic Violence Specialist established by the New Jersey Association of Domestic Violence Professionals; and “designated domestic violence agency” means a county-wide organization with a primary purpose to provide services to victims of domestic violence, and which provides services that conform to the core domestic violence services profile as defined by the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families and is under contract with the division for the express purpose of providing the services.

“Rape Crisis Center” means an office, institution, or center offering assistance to victims of sexual offenses through crisis intervention, medical and legal information, and follow-up counseling.

d. An employer shall display conspicuous notice of its employees’ rights and obligations pursuant to the provisions of this act, in such form and in such manner as the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development shall prescribe, and use other appropriate means to keep its employees so informed.

e. No provision of this act shall be construed as requiring or permitting an employer to reduce employment benefits provided by the employer or required by a collective bargaining agreement which are in excess of those required by this act. Nor shall any provision of this act be construed to prohibit the negotiation and provision through collective bargaining agreements of leave policies or benefit programs which provide benefits in excess of those required by this act. This provision shall apply irrespective of the date that a collective bargaining agreement takes effect.

Nothing contained in this act shall be construed as permitting an employer to:

(1) rescind or reduce any employment benefit accrued prior to the date on which the leave taken pursuant to this act commenced; or

(2) rescind or reduce any employment benefit, unless the rescission or reduction of the benefit is based on changes that would have occurred if an employee continued to work without taking the leave provided pursuant to this section.

f. All information provided to an employer pursuant to subsection c. of this section, and any information regarding a leave taken pursuant to this section and any failure of an employee to return to work, shall be retained in the strictest confidentiality, unless the disclosure is voluntarily authorized in writing by the employee or is required by a federal or State law, rule, or regulation.

C.34:11C-4 Certain actions by employer prohibited.

4. An employer shall not discharge, harass or otherwise discriminate or retaliate or threaten to discharge, harass or otherwise discriminate or retaliate against an employee with respect to the compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment on the basis that the employee took or requested any leave to which the employee was entitled pursuant to section 3 of this act or on the basis that the employee refused to authorize the release of information deemed confidential pursuant to subsection f. of section 3 of this act.

C.34:11C-5 Violations; penalties.

5. a. Upon a violation of any of the provisions of section 3 or section 4 of this act, an employee or former employee may institute a civil action in the Superior Court for relief. All remedies available in common law tort actions shall be available to a prevailing plaintiff. The court may also order any or all of the following relief:

(1) an assessment of a civil fine of not less than \$1,000 and not more than \$2,000 for the first violation of any of the provisions of section 3 or section 4 of this act and not more than \$5,000 for each subsequent violation;

P.L.2013, CHAPTER 82

(2) an injunction to restrain the continued violation of any of the provisions of section 3 or section 4 of this act;

(3) reinstatement of the employee to the same position or to a position equivalent to that which the employee held prior to unlawful discharge or retaliatory action;

(4) reinstatement of full fringe benefits and seniority rights;

(5) Compensation for any lost wages, benefits and other remuneration;

(6) payment of reasonable costs and attorney's fees.

b. An action brought under this section shall be commenced within one year of the date of the alleged violation.

c. A private cause of action provided for in this section shall be the sole remedy for a violation of this act.

6. This act shall take effect on the first day of the third month next following the date of enactment.

Approved July 17, 2013.