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**NEW FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE ACT REGULATIONS WILL
HELP MILITARY FAMILIES AND IMPROVE LAW FOR
EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS**

*National Coalition to Protect Family Leave
Welcomes New FMLA Regulations*

WASHINGTON — New regulations implementing the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will provide additional leave for military families, while providing better guidance for both employees and employers to ensure the law is working as Congress intended, according to the National Coalition to Protect Family Leave. The new rules, issued by the Department of Labor, follow an extensive review process that included dozens of congressional hearings and more than 15,000 stakeholder comments.

“This landmark legislation has benefited millions of Americans and their families,” said Lisa Horn, chair of the National Coalition to Protect Family Leave. “After 15 years, it was clearly time for a comprehensive review of the regulations. Based on our initial review, we are confident the new rules will support our military families, protect all of FMLA’s important benefits and should give employers additional clarity that they need to implement the statute effectively.”

The Family and Medical Leave Act was enacted in 1993 to allow workers to take unpaid leave to attend to important family and medical issues. Under the new rules, employees will still be able to take time off for the birth or adoption of a child, to take care of a family member with a serious illness, or seek treatment themselves when seriously ill. The new regulations should help clear up regulatory confusions that often made the FMLA difficult for employees to understand and unworkable for employers to administer and triggered a tremendous amount of litigation, including cases that reached the Supreme Court.

During its review, the Labor Department reported an explosion in sporadic, unscheduled leave – particularly the inappropriate use of medical leave – which was never envisioned by FMLA’s authors. This unfair use of leave created enormous challenges for managers of time-sensitive operations such as emergency responders, public safety and public health operations run by state and local governments, as well as for employers in the transportation and communications industries.

“The FMLA was never intended to turn full-time jobs into part-time jobs, to allow employees to take sporadic leave without any notification to employers, or to unfairly burden colleagues forced to cover the unpredictable absences of their co-workers,” said Horn. “This rule simply restores the balance Congress intended between employers’ needs for employees, and employees’ need for time to attend to important family and medical issues.”

The Coalition said it would continue to push for additional improvements, especially regarding the serious issue of use of unscheduled, intermittent leave, which threatens the work environment for millions of legitimate users of FMLA leave.

The National Coalition to Protect Family Leave is a broad-based, non-partisan group of organizations, companies and associations dedicated to protecting the integrity of the Family and Medical Leave Act.