

Winston & Strawn Announces Gender-Neutral Parental Leave Policies

MAY 18, 2016

CHICAGO – Winston & Strawn LLP today announced a new gender-neutral parental leave program. The firm will offer all associates and of counsel attorneys, regardless of gender, paid parental leave of up to 20 weeks. This change is effective immediately, including for those currently on leave, and applies in all of Winston’s domestic offices. The firm has also made parallel enhancements to its leave policies for practice attorneys and staff.

“In order to retain our outstanding performers and recruit the next generation of leaders for the firm, we need to offer the most competitive benefits and invest in our people,” said Tom Fitzgerald, Winston’s firmwide managing partner. “We believe these new policies will provide a meaningful level of support and enable our attorneys and staff who are parents to continue to advance in their careers.”

“These changes are ultimately about human capital,” added Julie Goodman, Winston’s chief human resources officer. “We want to attract and retain the most talented people and promote their success for the long term, regardless of gender.”

Under the new policy, U.S.-based associates and of counsel attorneys – regardless of gender – will receive up to 20 weeks of paid parental leave for child care and parent-child bonding, to be taken in one or two increments within the first year after the child arrives. Parents are not required to designate themselves as primary or non-primary caregivers—a distinction that may not reflect the needs and experience of individuals in two-career households.

The firm has also created a Parental Leave Transition Support Program to assist attorneys who take a parental leave. The program includes: 1) a Parental Leave Liaison to assist attorneys in preparing for and returning from parental leave, 2) confidential career coaching services, and 3) “ramp-down” and “ramp-up” periods during which an attorney’s billable hours targets will be adjusted to aid in the transition.

In keeping with the focus on gender-neutral parental leave benefits, the firm has also enhanced its leave policies for U.S.-based practice attorneys and staff employees.

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