



Print Go Back

©WorldatWork | 877/951-9191

WorldatWork Post

WorldatWork Post home

Reader Comments (0)

Rating (0):

Who Will Drive Workplace Flexibility?

The Brookings Institute held a Future of Children event on workplace flexibility to release the latest issue of its "Work and Family" journal and an accompanying policy brief titled "Work-Family Conflict: Look to Employers and Communities for Solutions."

The authors of the policy brief argue that current economic conditions and political gridlock mean that the "prospects for federal child care legislation are...bleak," while the states' efforts to maintain balanced budgets provides little hope for additional spending on policies friendly to working families. Instead, it is up to employers and community institutions, such as schools, health care providers and elder service organizations, to build on the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act with robust policies to help employees avoid work-life conflict. Maryella Gockel, the flexibility strategy leader at accounting firm Ernst & Young, discussed her organization's efforts in this context, noting that going above and beyond the basic standards set by government has been essential to reducing turnover in their workforce.

One contributor to the journal, Heather Boushey from the Center for American Progress, noted that substantial progress has been made in the public policy arena. Rather than serving to hinder efforts to enact workplace flexibility laws, the recent recession has actually served to spur some states and localities to institute policies that create a more flexible work environment for employees. Some examples from her report: In 2008, Utah placed most employees to a four-day workweek to save money on energy costs. San Francisco and Washington, D.C. gained the right to job-protected paid sick leave in 2007 and 2010, respectively. Though seemingly counterintuitive, numerous studies show that these policies make for a happier, healthier and more productive workforce, and that employers benefit from implementing workplace flexibility strategies. Ms. Boushey argued that this type of economic environment is exactly the time for government to promote practices that lead to a stronger workforce.

This dovetails nicely with my report last week on the National Science Foundation's institution of new flexibility policies for government professionals in the STEM fields. So although new federal laws may not be on the immediate horizon, government has shown a willingness to lead by example. These continued efforts by the federal government ensure that work-life balance remains at the forefront of the discussion around a modern business model.

The opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of WorldatWork.

Reader Comments

Comments:

Empty text box for reader comments.

Post your Comments: Log in | Register

Share



Posts by Matt Danzer | All Posts Public Policy Intern



email Matt LinkedIn profile RSS Feed

Blogs Matt's Reading

- Taegan Goddard's Political Wire The Hotline Politico's Morning Score

Most Recent Posts

Who Will Drive Workplace Flexibility?

The Brookings Institute held a Future of Children event on workplace flexibility to release the latest issue of its "Work and Family" journal and an accompanying policy brief titled "Work-Family Conflict: Look to Employers and Communities for Solutions." Oct 6, 2011

NSF Leads the Way on Workplace Flexibility

On Monday, September 26, the WorldatWork Public Policy team attended an event at the White House where First Lady Michelle Obama announced the National Science Foundation Career-Life Balance Initiative. Sep 27, 2011

Job Creation, Debt Reduction, and What You Need to Know

The last month has been a hotbed for proposals to boost the United States' flailing employment numbers, decrease the nation's growing debt and deficits, and put us back on a sustainable path for growth... But what is substance and what is politics? Sep 22, 2011

Knowledge Is Health

For many employees, making decisions about health insurance is never easy. From the feeling of unease when presented with too many options, to the perennial fear that you made the wrong choice, aren't fully covered or are paying too much, the world of health care is daunting. Sep 20, 2011

---

**Who Will Run the Health Care Exchanges?**

While President Barack Obama's signature health care reform law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, continues to face repeal attempts in Congress and legal challenges in the courts, the job of implementation continues, but not without its own set of hurdles.

Sep 19, 2011

[More >>](#)