

## Impact of Family and Medical Leave on Employees

This chapter discusses various aspects of employees' experiences with family and medical leave and the impact such leave had on them, focusing largely on findings from the 2000 Survey of Employees. Where applicable, comparisons to findings from the 1995 survey are also presented. Most comparisons pertain only to the longest leave taken (if more than one leave was taken), since data on multiple leaves was not collected in the 1995 survey. It should also be noted that results are discussed for all persons who took leave for a reason covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act, regardless of whether they were covered and eligible under the Act.

Differences between groups (including the 1995 and 2000 surveys) were analyzed for statistical significance by means of either chi-square tests or z-tests. These tests were computed taking into account the specific sample design and weighting of the data. An observed difference has been deemed "significant" if there is less than a 10 percent chance that the difference occurred by chance, given that the null hypothesis of "no difference" is true (i.e.,  $p < .10$ ). Furthermore, for all significant differences it is noted whether the significance is at the 10 percent level ( $p < .10$ ) or the 5 percent level ( $p < .05$ ).

### 4.1 Circumstances Surrounding the Use of Leave

As noted in Chapter 2, about 23.8 million employees took leave for an FMLA reason since January 1999, and roughly 3.5 million employees needed but did not take leave in this period. There are many possible reasons why employees who do take leave might be reluctant to do so. (See Chapter 2 for reasons why employees needed leave but did not take it.) They may worry about the financial burden of being without pay for a time. They may be concerned about a negative impact on their careers, or even losing their jobs (although FMLA protects covered and eligible

employees from job loss). To examine these issues, persons who had taken leave since January 1, 1999 were presented with several items describing potential worries that employees may have about taking leave, and were asked if these worries had been true for them. Table 4.1 lists these items along with the percentage of leave-takers who indicated the item had represented a worry for them. The most frequently mentioned worry was financial, in that leave-takers had been concerned they would not have enough money to pay their bills (53.8%). About one-fourth of leave-takers had been worried that either their job would be lost (26.9%) or that the leave would hurt their job advancement (26.2%). A small percentage of leave-takers (13.2%) reported they were worried for other reasons. Among these leave-takers, the most frequently specified worries had been beliefs that their work responsibilities would not be met and that their coworkers would be unduly burdened by having to take on extra work.

**Table 4.1. Leave-Taker Worries About Taking Leave: 2000 Survey**

<b>Worries About Taking Leave:</b>	<b>Percent of Leave-Takers</b>
Worried job might be lost	26.9%
Worried leave might hurt job advancement	26.2%
Worried seniority would be lost	12.9%
Worried about not having enough money for bills	53.8%
Worried for some other reason	13.2%

*Note:* Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could report more than one effect on health.

Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

Leave-takers were also asked how easy or difficult it had been to get their employers to allow them time off. The majority of leave-takers found it either “very easy” (59.6%) or “somewhat easy” (18.2%) to take family or medical leave (Table 4.2). Compared to findings from the 1995 survey, the percentage of leave-takers who found it “very easy” to get leave from their employers significantly declined (from 65%).

**Table 4.2. Ease of Getting Time Off: 1995 and 2000 Surveys**

How easy or difficult was it for you to get your employer to let you take time off?	Percent of Leave-Takers	
	1995 Survey	2000 Survey
Very easy**	65.0%	59.6%
Somewhat easy	16.3%	18.2%
Neither easy nor difficult	6.7%	8.2%
Somewhat difficult	6.7%	9.2%
Very difficult	5.4%	4.8%

\*\* Difference between 1995 and 2000 is significant at  $p < .05$ .

*Note:* Column percents may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

## 4.2 Financial Issues

### 4.2.1 Loss of Job Benefits During Leave

Benefits such as health insurance and disability insurance are an important part of the compensation package for many employees. When employees take leave, there is a risk that some or all of these benefits may not be available during the time off work.<sup>27</sup> However, as shown in Figure 4.1, only a small percentage of leave-takers (6.5%) lost benefits while on leave. In fact, this small percentage represents a significant decline since 1995, when 8.9 percent of leave-takers were found to have lost benefits.

<sup>27</sup> FMLA requires the continuation of health benefits for covered and eligible employees taking leave.

**Figure 4.1. Benefit Status During Longest Leave: 1995 and 2000 Surveys (Percent of Leave-Takers)**

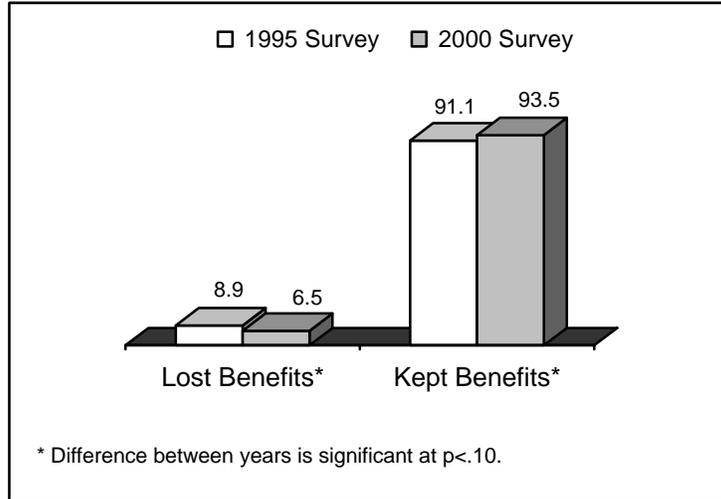


Table 4.3 shows the percentage of leave-takers reporting the loss of various types of benefits during their leave. Overall, very few leave-takers reported losing benefits. Health insurance was the most frequent lost benefit (2.0%). Much smaller percentages of leave-takers lost pension contributions (0.8%) and life or disability insurance. Some leave-takers (5.1%) reported losing “other” benefits. When asked to specify these lost benefits, most indicated lost vacation or sick time, or loss of pay for the missed workdays. No significant change was detected when comparing these data to similar data gathered in 1995.

**Table 4.3. Benefits Lost During Longest Leave: 1995 and 2000 Surveys**

	Percent of Leave-Takers	
	1995 Survey	2000 Survey
Health Insurance	2.9%	2.0%
Life insurance	1.0%	--
Disability insurance	0.8%	--
Pension contributions	1.1%	0.8%
Other	5.9%	5.1%

-- Indicates less than 10 unweighted cases.

*Note:* Respondents could report more than one benefit was lost.

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

## 4.2.2 Paid Leave Versus Unpaid Leave

Financial concerns stemming from a possible loss of pay are an important consideration for most anyone considering taking time off work. As discussed in Chapter 2, many of those who had not taken a leave when needed (i.e., “leave-needers”) said the reason was their inability to afford time off. Data on whether leave-takers received any pay during their leaves is shown in Table 4.4. About two-thirds of leave-takers (65.8%) reported receiving some pay during their leave. This estimate has not significantly changed since 1995.

**Table 4.4. Receipt of Pay During Longest Leave: 1995 and 2000 Surveys**

	Percent of Leave-Takers	
	1995 Survey	2000 Survey
Received at least some pay during their longest leave	66.4%	65.8%
Received no pay during longest leave	33.6%	34.2%

*Note:* The data in this table are based on differently worded questions used in the 1995 and 2000 surveys. In 1995, the question asked was: “Was the leave fully paid, unpaid, or partially paid?” In 2000, the question was: “Did you receive pay for any part of your (longest) leave?”

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

The receipt of pay during leave is related to demographics in a number of ways, as shown in Appendix Table A2-4.1. This table shows the percentage of leave-takers within each demographic group who did, and did not, receive any pay during their longest leave. It reveals that male leave-takers were significantly more likely to receive pay (70.4%) than have female leave-takers (62.5%). In addition, salaried workers were much more likely to receive pay (87.6%), compared to hourly workers (54%). Furthermore, about three-fourths of leave-takers of relatively high education and household income levels were paid while on leave. By contrast, younger employees (aged 18 to 24), those who have never married, those with less than a high school education, and those with household incomes of less than \$20,000 were especially unlikely to have been paid. In fact, well under half of the leave-takers within these groups reported receiving pay during their longest leave.

In the 2000 survey, leave-takers who received at least some pay during their (longest) leave were asked about the source of this pay, such as whether it was

from sick leave or disability insurance. Table 4.5 indicates that for most leave-takers (61.4%), pay was in the form of sick leave. Vacation leave (39.4%), personal leave (25.7%) and temporary disability insurance (18%) were other common sources of pay for leave-takers. It is also worth noting that 42.9 percent (not shown) of paid leave-takers received pay from more than one source.

**Table 4.5. Source of Pay During Longest Leave: 2000 Survey**

	<b>Percent of Leave-Takers Receiving Pay During Longest Leave</b>
Sick leave	61.4%
Vacation leave	39.4%
Personal leave	25.7%
Parental leave	7.7%
Temporary disability insurance	18.0%
Other benefits	11.4%
<b>Number of Leave-Takers Receiving Pay</b>	<b>15,620,658</b>

*Note:* Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could report more than one source of pay.

Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

A related topic of interest is the extent to which leave-takers received full versus partial pay during their leave, as well as whether they were paid for the full leave period or paid for only part of their leave period. Table 4.6 presents these data. About three-fourths (72.2%) of those who were paid received their full pay, and received it for their complete leave period. Most of the remaining paid leave-takers received only partial pay, but for the full period of their leave (21.6%).

**Table 4.6. Full versus Partial Pay Across the Leave Period: 2000 Survey**

	<b>Percent of Leave-Takers Receiving Pay During Longest Leave</b>
Paid for entire leave period at full pay	72.2%
Paid for entire leave period at partial pay	21.6%
Paid for part of the leave period at full pay	2.6%
Paid for part of the leave period at partial pay	3.6%

*Note:* Column percents may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

Leave-takers reporting that they received partial pay while on leave were asked whether they received less than half, about half, or more than half of their usual pay. As Table 4.7 shows, 43.9 percent of these leave-takers received more than half, while about a third (31.1%) reported receiving less than half. One-fourth (25%) reported receiving about half their usual pay.

**Table 4.7. Proportion of Usual Pay Received by Leave-Takers Receiving Only Partial Pay: 2000 Survey**

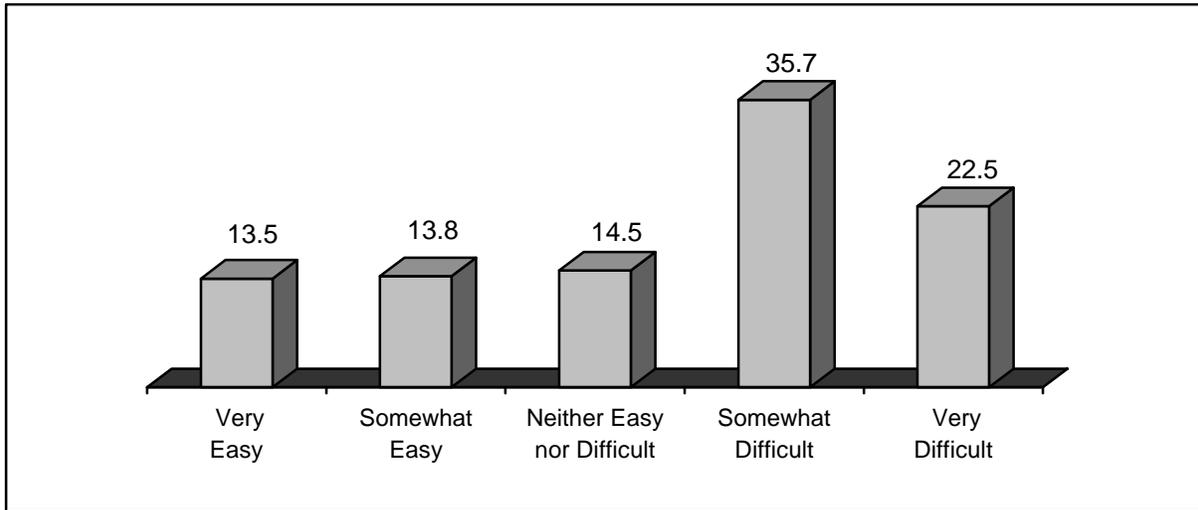
<b>Proportion of Usual Pay Received While on Leave</b>	<b>Percent of Leave-Takers Receiving Partial Pay During Longest Leave</b>
Less than half	31.1%
About half	25.0%
More than half	43.9%
<b>Number of Leave-Takers Receiving Partial Pay</b>	<b>4,401,295</b>

*Note:* Column percents may not total to 100% due to rounding.  
Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

### **4.2.3 Impact of Pay Loss on Leave-Takers**

Leave-takers who received less than full pay (including no pay) during their longest leave were asked about the difficulty of making ends meet while away from work. Responses are shown in Figure 4.2. Over half of these leave-takers experienced difficulty, stating it was either “somewhat difficult” (35.7%) or “very difficult” (22.5%) to make ends meet. Only about a fourth said that it was easy, with 13.5 percent noting it was “very easy” and 13.8 percent indicating “somewhat easy” (see also Appendix A2-4.2).

**Figure 4.2. Ease of Making Ends Meet During Leave: 2000 Survey  
(Percent of Leave-Takers Receiving Less than Full Pay During Longest Leave)**



Leave-takers receiving less than full pay were also asked a series of questions about the methods they relied upon in adjusting to a lower level of pay for that period. Table 4.8 indicates that leave-takers adjusted in a variety of ways. Most were inclined to “limit extras” (70.1%). Many relied on money they had saved, such as savings specially earmarked for their leave situation (47%) or savings meant for something else (35.6%). Many were also forced to put off paying bills (38.5%), borrow money (29%), or even cut short their leave time (37%). Analyses comparing these data to results from the 1995 survey revealed one significant change: the tendency to “limit extras” during leave has decreased since 1995, from 75.4 percent to 70.1 percent.

**Table 4.8. How Lost Wages were Covered During Leave:  
1995 and 2000 Surveys**

	Percent of Leave-Takers Receiving Less Than Full Pay During Longest Leave	
	1995 Survey	2000 Survey
Use savings earmarked for this situation	43.7%	47.0%
Use savings earmarked for something else	40.6%	35.6%
Borrow money	25.1%	29.0%
Go on public assistance	8.9%	8.7%
Limit extras*	75.4%	70.1%
Put off paying bills	38.7%	38.5%
Cut leave time short	40.3%	37.0%
Did something else	13.0%	9.7%

\* Difference between 1995 and 2000 is significant at  $p < .10$ .

*Note:* Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could report more than one method of covering lost wages.

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

A final question asked of leave-takers who had received less than full pay during their (longest) leave concerned whether they would have taken more time off had they received some (or additional) pay. As noted above, 37 percent of these persons indicated they had cut their leave time short due to their lost (or lower level of) pay. When asked if they would have taken leave for a longer period if they had received some (or additional) pay, half of the leave-takers receiving less than full pay answered they would have taken a longer period of leave (Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9. Perceived Impact of Pay on Length of Leave: 2000 Survey**

Perceived Impact of Pay	Percent of Leave-Takers Receiving Less Than Full Pay During Longest Leave
Would have taken leave for a longer period if some/additional pay had been received	50.9%
Would <u>not</u> have taken leave for a longer period if some/additional pay had been received	49.1%

Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

### 4.3 Impact of Leave on the Well-Being of Employees and Families

Leave-takers were asked a series of items concerning whether using family and medical leave had a “positive effect” or “no effect” on their well-being. These items are shown in Table 4.10, along with leave-takers’ responses. Not surprisingly, leave is viewed rather positively by those who took it. For example, among those who took leave to care for a family member (either a newborn, ill child, spouse, or parent), a majority (78.7%) indicated that taking leave had a positive effect on their ability to care for that person (although perhaps it is more interesting that 21.3 percent of these leave-takers replied that it had “no effect.”). Most leave-takers (70.1%) indicated that taking leave had a positive effect on their (or a family member’s) emotional well-being. Additionally, two-thirds (63%) said the leave had a positive impact on their (or a family member’s) physical health.

**Table 4.10. Effects of Using Family and Medical Leave: 2000 Survey**

	<b>Percent of Leave-Takers</b>
<b>Ability to Care for Family Members<sup>(1)</sup></b> <i>Positive effect</i> <i>No effect</i>	78.7% 21.3%
<b>Ability to Select a Satisfactory Childcare Provider<sup>(2)</sup></b> <i>Positive effect</i> <i>No effect</i>	40.4% 59.6%
<b>Ability to Select a Satisfactory Caretaker for Sick Family Member<sup>(3)</sup></b> <i>Positive effect</i> <i>No effect</i>	47.9% 52.1%
<b>Leave-Taker’s or Family Member’s Physical Health</b> <i>Positive effect</i> <i>No effect</i>	63.0% 37.0%
<b>Leave-Taker’s or Family Member’s Emotional Well-Being</b> <i>Positive effect</i> <i>No effect</i>	70.1% 29.9%

(1) Percentages based on persons taking leave to care for newborn, newly adopted or new foster child, or an ill family member (either a child, spouse, or parent).

(2) Percentages based on persons taking leave for a newborn, or a newly adopted or new foster child.

(3) Percentages based on persons taking leave to care for an ill family member (either a child, spouse, or parent).

Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

The 63 percent of leave-takers who indicated that leave had a positive effect on physical health (their own or that of a family member) were further asked about possible outcomes stemming from the leave. As Table 4.11 shows, almost all of these leave-takers (93.5%) felt that taking time off made it easier to comply with a doctor's instructions, and the vast majority (83.7%) also felt that taking leave resulted in a quicker recovery time. About a third (32.0%) indicated it delayed or avoided the need to enter a long-term care facility. Of the 17.0 percent who reported that the leave had "other effects," few gave very specific answers when asked to elaborate, and many of these persons referred to their emotional state (e.g., "less stress"), rather than physical health.

**Table 4.11. Positive Outcomes of Effects of Using Family and Medical Leave: 2000 Survey**

<b>Effect on Employee's or Family Member's Physical Health</b>	<b>Percent of Leave-Takers Stating that Leave Had a Positive Effect on Physical Health</b>
Quicker recovery time	83.7%
Easier to comply with doctor's instructions	93.5%
Delayed/avoided need to enter nursing home or other long-term care facility	32.0%
Other effects	17.0%
<b>Number of Leave-Takers Stating that Leave had a Positive Effect on Physical Health</b>	<b>14,513,291</b>

*Note:* Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could report more than one effect on health.

Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

#### **4.4 Circumstances Surrounding the Employee's Return to Work**

Leave-takers were asked if they went back to the same employer, a new employer, or if they did not return to work at all after their leave ended. Findings are shown in Table 4.12, along with comparable data from 1995. Results indicate that almost all leave-takers (94.4%) returned to work for the same employer. Deciding to go to work for a different employer was very rare (1.9%) and declined significantly since 1995. (See also Section 3.5.3 for data on return to work for those taking leave under the FMLA.)

**Table 4.12. Returning to Work After Longest Leave:  
1995 and 2000 Surveys**

	Percent of Leave-Takers	
	1995 Survey	2000 Survey
Returned to work for the same employer	93.8%	94.4%
Went to work for a new employer*	3.1%	1.9%
Did not return to work at all	3.0%	3.8%
<b>Number of Leave-Takers <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>18,288,293</b>	<b>21,043,859</b>

(1) This number excludes leave-takers who were still on leave at the time of their interview (approximately 10 percent of leave-takers in 1995 and 12% in 2000).

\* Difference between 1995 and 2000 is significant at  $p < .10$ .

*Note:* Column percents may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

Leave-takers returning to work for the same employer were also asked whether they returned to the same (or equal) position, a higher position, or a lower position. As Table 4.13 shows, almost everyone (97.1%) returned to the same position once their leave ended, and very few (1.8%) returned to a lower position. In comparison to findings from the 1995 survey, no significant differences were found.

**Table 4.13. Position Returned to After Longest Leave:  
1995 and 2000 Surveys**

	Percent of Leave-Takers Returning to Same Employer	
	1995 Survey	2000 Survey
Same or equal position	96.8%	97.1%
Higher position	1.3%	1.1%
Lower position	1.8%	1.8%
<b>Number of Leave-Takers Returning to Same Employer</b>	<b>17,156,285</b>	<b>19,859,091</b>

*Note:* Column percents may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

Leave-takers returning to the same employer were also asked about why they went back to work. They were presented with a series of items describing possible reasons why someone might go back to work, and asked to indicate if this was a reason for their own return to work. Table 4.14 lists the various reasons included in this series and shows the percentage of leave-takers indicating each as a reason for them. The most common reason for going back to work was simply no longer

needing to be on leave (77.1%). Two-thirds (66.1%) said they “just wanted to get back to work.” But half (50.4%) also mentioned an inability to afford more time off, and a third (33.7%) reported having used up all of their leave time. Furthermore, one-fourth of leave-takers (23.6%) reported that “someone else took over care.” In fact, about half (48.5%, not shown) of all those who took leave to care for a newborn or ill family indicated this as a reason for going back to work. Two reasons for going back to work are significantly more likely in 2000: just wanting to get back to work, and using up one’s allowed leave time.

**Table 4.14. Reasons for Leave-Takers’ Return to Work:  
1995 and 2000 Surveys**

	Percent of Leave-Takers Returning to Same Employer	
	1995 Survey	2000 Survey
No longer needed to be on leave	74.1%	77.1%
Could not afford to take more time off	46.7%	50.4%
Just wanted to get back to work**	55.3%	66.1%
Used up all the leave time allowed**	21.8%	33.7%
Felt pressure by boss/co-workers to return	22.7%	24.2%
Had too much work to do	32.5%	30.1%
Someone else took over care	NA	23.6%

\*\* Difference between 1995 and 2000 is significant at  $p < .05$ .

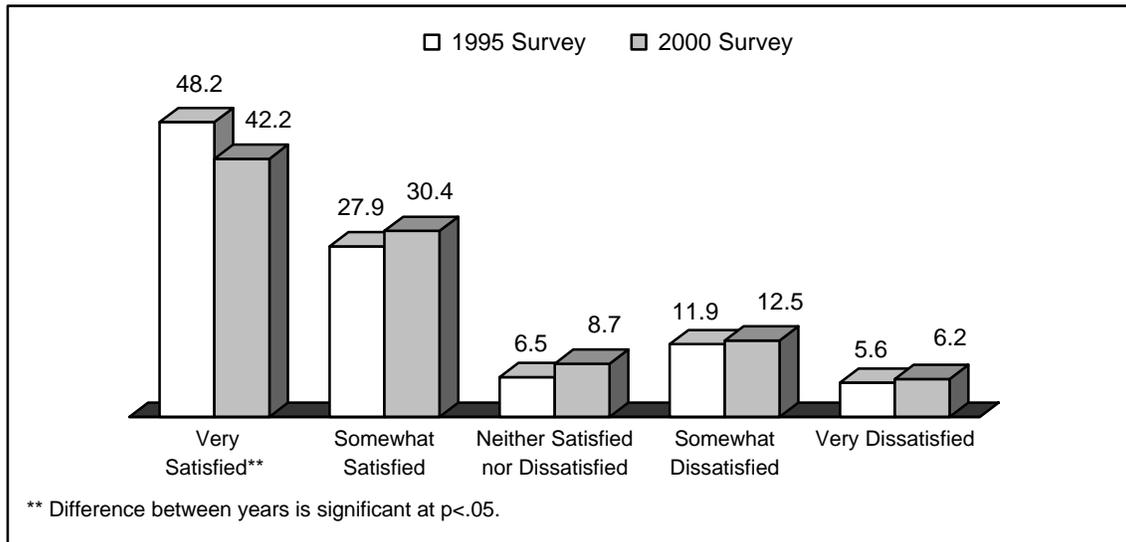
NA Indicates item not asked in 1995 survey.

*Note:* Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could report more than one reason for returning to work.

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

Leave-takers were asked how satisfied they were with the amount of time they took while on leave. Figure 4.3 shows that most leave-takers were either very satisfied (42.2%) or somewhat satisfied (30.4%) with the time they took off from work. It is worth noting, however, that the percentage of those stating very satisfied has decreased to a significant degree since 1995 (See also Appendix Table A2-4.3).

**Figure 4.3. Satisfaction with the Length of the Longest Leave: 1995 and 2000 Surveys (Percent of Leave-Takers)**



## 4.5 Denial of Leave

In Chapter 2 it was noted that about a fifth of those who needed leave (but did not take it) reported being denied the opportunity to do so by their employers. However, persons in the study who did take leave were also asked if they had been denied leave at some time (since January 1, 1999) to take care of family or medical problems. Responses to this question, along with the responses for a comparable period prior to the 1995 survey, are shown in Table 4.15. It is estimated that 6.2 percent of leave-takers were denied leave at some time during this period. There was no significant change in this measure since 1995.

**Table 4.15. Leave-Takers Denied Leave: 1995 and 2000 Surveys**

	Percent of Leave-Takers	
	1995 Survey	2000 Survey
Denied leave	6.6%	6.2%
Not denied leave	93.4%	93.8%
<b>Number of Leave-Takers</b>	<b>20,359,640</b>	<b>23,830,305</b>

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

## 4.6 Use of Leave by Employees with Young Children

This section describes the use of leave (both FMLA-covered and non-covered) by employees with young children age 18 months or younger. This group is of interest because these persons would have had a child born or perhaps placed into their family within the time covered by the survey, and thus might have needed to use leave.<sup>28</sup> Results are presented by gender because women historically have taken more responsibility for the care of young children and have taken more leave to do so.

Table 4.16 shows that among employees with a young child, three-fourths of both women (74.5%) and men (75%) are at a covered worksite. The proportion who are both covered and eligible is 56.3 percent for women and 66.7 percent for men; (this difference is not statistically significant).

**Table 4.16. Coverage and Eligibility Among Female and Male Employees with Young Children: 2000 Survey**

	Percent of Females	Percent of Males	Percent of All Employees with Young Children
<b>Number of Employees with Young Children</b>	<b>4,146,171</b>	<b>5,524,516</b>	<b>9,670,687</b>
Employees at FMLA-covered worksites	74.5%	75.0%	74.8%
Eligible employees at FMLA-covered worksites	56.3%	66.7%	62.2%
Employees at worksites not covered by FMLA	25.5%	25.0%	25.2%

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

Not surprisingly, a high percentage of employees with young children (58.2%) took leave for a covered reason during the 18 months covered by the survey (Table 4.17). Women with young children were significantly more likely to be leave-takers relative to men with young children. Among women, 75.8 percent took leave and only a small number said they needed but did not take leave. Among men, just under half (45.1%) took leave, and 3.8 percent said they needed but did not take leave.

<sup>28</sup> Note that this does not include employees who have recently adopted or fostered an older child.

**Table 4.17. Leaves Taken and Needed Among Female and Male Employees with Young Children: 2000 Survey**

	Percent of Females**	Percent of Males	Percent of All Employees with Young Children
Percent taking leave (for a covered reason) since January 1, 1999	75.8%	45.1%	58.2%
Percent needing, but not taking, leave (for a covered reason) since January 1, 1999	--	3.8%	3.1%
Percent not taking or needing leave	22.0%	51.1%	38.6%

\*\* Difference between males and females is significant at  $p < .05$ .

-- Indicates less than 10 unweighted cases.

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

Table 4.18 shows reasons for leave during the 18-month period among leave-takers with young children. By far, the most commonly cited reason for leave was to care for a newborn or a newly adopted or newly placed foster child (59.7%). But this type of leave was taken by a significantly higher share of males (75.6%) than females (47.2%). Maternity leave, for which only women are eligible, was taken by 42.8 percent of the women leave-takers. Among both men and women leave-takers, one-fifth took leave for their own health over this time period. Only small percentages of men and women leave-takers with young children took some leave to care for a seriously ill child or parent.

While Table 4.18 shows what types of leave were taken by leave-takers, it does not show what share of *all employees* with young children took various types of leave. This information is provided in Table 4.19. This table shows that among all employees with a child age 18 months or younger, about a third (35.8 percent of women and 34.1 percent of men) took some leave to care for a newborn or a newly placed adoptive or foster child. Another third of women (32.4%) took some maternity leave. Some new parents also reported taking leave for their own serious health condition (15.3 percent of women and 9.1 percent of men). Small numbers of both men and women took some leave to care for a seriously ill child or parent, but only men (and in small numbers) took any leave to care for a seriously ill spouse during this time period.

**Table 4.18. Reasons for Taking Leave, Across All Leaves Taken, by Females and Males with Young Children: 2000 Survey**

Reason for Leave	Percent of Leave-Takers with Young Children		
	Percent Females	Percent Males	Percent All
Own health	20.2%	20.2%	20.2%
Maternity-disability	42.8%	&	23.9%
Care for a newborn, newly adopted or newly placed foster child **	47.2%	75.6%	59.7%
Care for ill child	--	--	3.5%
Care for ill spouse	&	--	--
Care for ill parent	--	--	--

\*\* Difference between males and females is significant at  $p < .05$ .

-- Indicates less than 10 unweighted cases.

& Indicates that no significance test was conducted because of zero cell.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% due to some persons taking more than one leave.

Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

**Table 4.19. Reasons for Taking Leave, Across All Leaves Taken, Based on Total Population of Female and Male Employees with Young Children: 2000 Survey**

Reason for Leave	Percent of All Employees with Young Children		
	Percent Females	Percent Males	Percent All
Own health	15.3%	9.1%	11.8%
Maternity-disability	32.4%	&	13.9%
Care for a newborn, newly adopted, or newly placed foster child	35.8%	34.1%	34.8%
Care for ill child	--	--	2.0%
Care for ill spouse	&	--	--
Care for ill parent	--	--	--

-- Indicates less than 10 unweighted cases.

& Indicates that no significance test was conducted because of zero cell.

Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

**4.7**

**Employee Views of FMLA Leave and the Impact of Leave on Co-workers**

This section discusses the views of employees toward family and medical leave. Results discussed here reflect the views of all employees—i.e., leave-takers, leave-needers, and those who were “employed only” (i.e., those who neither took nor needed a leave for a covered reason in the period covered by the survey). Employees were asked if they agree or disagree that: (a) Everyone should be able to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year for family or medical reasons, and (b) Having to give employees up to 12 weeks of leave for family and medical problems is an unfair burden on co-workers. The extent to which employees agreed and disagreed with these statements is shown in Table 4.20. Responses indicate that the vast majority (81.4%) of employees believe in the right to take up to 12 weeks of leave, and most (63.9%) do not feel that using leave is an unfair burden to co-workers. Both of these findings reflect significantly more positive views towards rights granted by FMLA, compared to an assessment of these views in 1995.

**Table 4.20. Employees’ Opinions Toward FMLA: 1995 and 2000 Surveys**

<b>Opinion Measure</b>	<b>1995 Survey</b>	<b>2000 Survey</b>
Every person should be able to have up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a year from work for family and medical problems. <i>Agree**</i> <i>Disagree**</i>	 72.3% 27.7%	 81.4% 18.6%
Having to provide employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a year for family and medical problems is an unfair burden to employees’ co-workers. <i>Agree**</i> <i>Disagree**</i>	 43.8% 56.2%	 36.1% 63.9%

\*\* Difference between 1995 and 2000 is significant at p<.05.

Source: 1995 and 2000 Survey of Employees.

All respondents were also asked if any of their co-workers took leave for family or medical reasons since January 1, 1999. Most employees (63.0%) have had a coworker take leave, as shown in Table 4.21. In order to learn about the effect of leave-taking on other employees, these respondents were asked if they worked more hours than usual, worked a shift that they did not normally work, or took on additional duties. Table 4.22 shows responses to these items. Just under half

(46.2%) of these employees took on additional duties when co-workers went on leave. About a third (32.1%) said they worked more hours than they usually do, while one-fifth (22.9%) worked a shift they would not usually work. To determine employees' views of these effects, those who reported at least one of the above effects were also asked if their co-workers' taking leave had a "positive impact," a "negative impact," or neither. Table 4.23 indicates that most employees (67.4%) reported that a coworker's leave had neither a positive or negative impact on them. The rest were roughly evenly split between viewing the impact as positive (17.4%) or negative (15.1%).

**Table 4.21. Co-workers Taking Leave for Family or Medical Reasons: 2000 Survey**

	Percent of Employees
Co-workers had taken leave for family or medical reasons since January 1, 1999	63.0%
Did not have co-workers take leave for family or medical reasons since January 1, 1999	37.0%

Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

**Table 4.22. Effects of Co-workers Taking Leave on Employees: 2000 Survey**

Effect:	Percent of Employees Having Co-workers Take Leave
Worked more hours than usual	32.1%
Worked a shift not normally worked	22.9%
Took on additional duties	46.2%

*Note:* Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could report more than one effect.

Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

**Table 4.23. Perceived Impact of Co-workers Taking Leave on Employees:  
2000 Survey**

Perceived Impact	Percent of Employees Reporting that Co-workers' Leave Had an Effect
Employees who felt that co-workers taking leave had a positive impact on them	17.4%
Employees who felt that co-workers taking leave had a negative impact on them	15.1%
Employees who felt that co-workers taking leave had neither a positive or negative impact on them	67.4%

*Note:* Column percents may not total to 100% due to rounding.  
Source: 2000 Survey of Employees.

## 4.8 Summary

This chapter discussed employees' experiences with taking leave. Employees who use leave often worry about doing so. Half of all leave-takers worry they will not have enough money to pay their bills. Others worry about negative impacts on their careers or jobs.

Employees rarely lose any benefits when they take leave. In fact, the percentage of leave-takers who lose benefits has decreased since 1995. Health insurance is the most frequently lost benefit, but this was true for only 2 percent of leave-takers.

Two-thirds of leave-takers receive at least some pay during their leave. Sick leave and vacation leave are the most frequent sources of this pay. Most of those who are paid received full pay for the entire period of their leave. Among leave-takers receiving less than full pay, most experience at least some financial difficulty during their leave. The manner in which employees cover their lost wages was largely unchanged since 1995.

Most employees return to work for the same employer (and to the same position) after ending their leave. The percentage of leave-takers going to work for a different employer has decreased since 1995.

This chapter also examined the leave-taking of parents with young children and found that about three-fourths of new mothers and almost half of new fathers have taken some leave for a covered reason in the prior 18 months. While maternity leave is used exclusively by women, leave to care for a newborn or newly placed foster or adoptive children is used by both men and women.

Most employees hold positive views about the rights granted by FMLA and do not feel it is a burden when their co-workers use it. Their views are significantly more favorable now than in 1995.