**California Additional Pregnancy Disability Leave Protections**

SB 299 **requires employers with five or more employees to maintain and pay for health coverage** under a group health plan for any eligible female employee who takes up to four months of leave due to pregnancy, childbirth or a related medical condition in a 12-month period. The employee’s benefits must be maintained at the same level and under the same conditions as coverage would have been provided had the employee continued in employment continuously for the duration of the leave.

As currently written, the California Family Rights Act (“CFRA”) does not explicitly prohibit “interference” with an employee’s right to take a leave of absence. Although merely “declarative of existing law,” the recently enacted AB 592 ([pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_0551-0600/ab_592_bill_20111009_chaptered.pdf)) clarifies that it is an unlawful employment practice for an employer to “interfere with,” restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under the CFRA, or due to disability by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.