

## Some States Start To Permit Portable Benefits For Gig Workers

Insights

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There's a great story in [today's Bloomberg Law](#) by Genevieve Douglas highlighting the recent trend of states permitting self-employed workers – such as gig economy contractors – to enjoy the fruits of a paid family leave program on a portable basis. This can only be good news for gig economy businesses and the gig economy as a whole. After all, as gig workers are afforded greater opportunities to enjoy the kinds of benefits (with flexibility), the number of well-qualified and higher skilled workers to join the labor pool will only grow.

In the article, "[Portability Makes Some Paid Leave Programs Good for Gig Workers](#)," Douglas notes that while six states and the District of Columbia have passed some form of paid leave programs in the recent past, California, New York, D.C., Washington, and Massachusetts allow self-employed workers to participate, while New Jersey and Rhode Island offer no such plan. She highlights the new law recently passed in Washington state – which will go into full effect on January 1, 2020 – as an example of a state that purposefully built the right of contractors and the portability aspect into the law in order to provide coverage for workers who prefer (or are forced by circumstance) to move from job to job (or task to task). A summary of the Washington [law can be found here](#). Douglas quotes Suzan LeVine, commissioner of the Washington State Employment Security Department, as saying, "The portability that we have, and that is baked into the program, is designed so that people don't have to win the boss lottery in order to access this benefit. ... You need 820 hours to qualify, and you could compose that from 820 different employers if you need to."

The hope is that this plan will be successful and will act as a guidepost for other states to follow. We'll continue to track this trend and will provide updates as portability spreads to other jurisdictions.

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**Richard R. Meneghello**  
Chief Content Officer  
503.205.8044  
[Email](#)