

Sheppard Mullin Enhances Parental Baby Bonding Policy for Attorneys and Staff

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Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP has announced several enhancements to the firm's existing parental baby bonding leave policy. The new benefits apply to both qualified attorneys and professional staff.

"We received a number of requests from attorneys and staff to review our policy to ensure we are competitive with the market," said Bess Sully, Sheppard Mullin's Chief Human Resources Officer. "Like many of our peer firms, we decided to move to one gender neutral parental baby bonding leave policy for all U.S. attorneys and staff. We believe this is the right move to support and retain our most valuable resource: our talent."

The new policy retains the current amount of paid leave for birth mothers (six weeks), and expands the baby bonding time for other new parents. Some of the highlights of the new policy, which was effective January 1, 2020 and grandfathers in anyone currently on leave, include the following:

- All new parents can take up to 12 weeks of paid parental baby bonding leave for the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child.
- Birth mothers will receive an additional 6-8 weeks paid disability leave for childbirth recovery depending on the period of actual disability.
- Paid bonding leave must be initiated within the first six months of the birth, adoption or foster care placement and completed within the first year.
- Ramp Time: Attorneys and paraprofessional timekeepers planning for a parental leave that is eight continuous weeks or longer, will have a reduced hours expectation during a ramp down and ramp up period of 6 weeks before and post leave. This ramp up/ramp down will have no negative impact on a potential hours-based bonus.