



Legal Alert: President Vetoes Bill Containing FMLA Revisions

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In a surprise move Monday, President Bush pocket vetoed the military spending bill that included revisions to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), discussed in our December 26 Legal Alert. While vacationing in Crawford Texas, the President announced he would veto the \$696 billion military authorization bill because it contained provisions that would expand the ability of Americans to seek financial compensation from countries that supported or sponsored terrorist acts, including Libya, Iran and Iraq under Saddam Hussein. President Bush expressed concern that these provisions could expose Iraq to significant financial burdens that could weaken the relationship between the U.S. and Iraq during “this critical period in Iraq’s history.”

The Bush administration has stated that it will work with Congress to restore a number of new military and veteran programs when Congress returns to work. Because President Bush used a pocket veto, allowing the bill to expire ten days after it was passed by the House, his decision cannot be overridden. Congressional leaders have indicated they hope to move swiftly to address the concerns of the White House and get the bill back to the president for his signature.

It is not clear if the revisions to the FMLA will be included in the new bill; however, both political parties have indicated support for provisions in the bill that provide increased benefits to military personnel and veterans.

We will continue to keep you updated on the status of this legislation. If you have any questions regarding this issue or other labor or employment related issues, please contact the Ford & Harrison attorney with whom you usually work or Doug Hall, a partner in our DC office, at dhall@fordharrison.com or 202-719-2065, or John Lowrie, an associate in our Denver office, at jlowrie@fordharrison.com or 303-592-8866.