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**The fashion issue**



## Maryland prepares for enterovirus cases

Unusual strain has been confirmed in neighboring states; local officials on alert

By **MEREDITH COHN**  
The Baltimore Sun

As an unusual strain of virus continues its march across the country — showing up most recently in Pennsylvania and Virginia — health officials in Maryland are warning doctors to be on the lookout and advising parents to prepare.

Enterovirus is common, with millions in the United States sickened every year,

most with mild cases.

But the relatively rare strain called EV-D68 can cause severe respiratory illness in children with asthma or other health conditions, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns.

“We’ve not seen any cases, but we’ve asked the provider community to be on the alert,” said Gregory Reed, a program manager with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. “It’s circulating around the country, so we’ll try and identify it and manage it if it pops up.”

The virus might already have turned up in Maryland, officials said. Doctors are not required to test for enterovirus, or to

### Enterovirus D68

The virus appears to sicken mainly children, but most cases are brief and mild, resembling a common cold. More serious problems can occur in those with underlying chronic conditions such as asthma, cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease, heart disease or compromised immune function. There is no specific treatment. Children should drink fluids and rest. Most children do not require emergency care or hospitalization, but medical attention is recommended when children struggle to breathe, have severe or prolonged vomiting, have a fever greater than 103 degrees for more than two days or are lethargic.

Sources: *The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Johns Hopkins Children’s Center*

## Cleanup OK’d for Sparrows Point

\$48 million pledged by site’s new owner, Redwood Capital

By **PAMELA WOOD**  
The Baltimore Sun

Hopes for redevelopment of the former Sparrows Point steel mill in Baltimore County — and the promise of new jobs — took two giant strides forward Thursday as the land was sold to a new owner who also reached agreement with state and federal environmental agencies on a cleanup plan for the polluted site.

The massive former Bethlehem Steel facility was shuttered two years ago and auctioned off in a bankruptcy-law proceeding to salvage companies.

The land has now been sold for an undisclosed amount to Sparrows Point Terminal, an offshoot of the Hanover-based investment firm Redwood Capital Investments LLC. Under terms of an agreement announced Thursday with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Maryland Department of the Environment, Redwood Capital will commit \$48 million to clean up the property’s land and groundwater, and pay \$3 million to the EPA to investigate issues in the water surrounding Sparrows Point.

In a statement, Gov. Martin O’Malley called the cleanup pact “a crucial step toward making this site an economic force and a source of jobs for years to come.”

“You’ve got a company with sufficient assets to put their money where their mouth is,” Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz said of Redwood, a company that bills itself as a capital management firm for “a small group of private investors in Baltimore.”

Redwood Capital plans to develop a

## More voices join call for universal access to maternity, family leave, but some business groups warn of the cost



KIM HAIRSTON/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTO

Elizabeth Rhodes reads to her son, William. When she went on maternity leave last year, her employer, M&T Bank, covered the difference between her short-term disability insurance benefit and her full salary for four weeks. “It was nice and a great benefit,” she says.

## Making time for the baby

By **DANAE KING AND COLIN CAMPBELL**  
The Baltimore Sun

Shellyann Smith took 12 weeks off for the births of each of her two children — and got paid for it.

Smith, a 32-year-old customer service and sales specialist at the Bank of America call center in Hunt Valley, says her employer’s policy of granting 12 weeks of paid maternity leave meant she “didn’t have to think about work or worry about my job being there when I got back.”

A growing movement of workers — and their supporters in Annapolis and Wash-

ington — wants to make the benefit universal.

Democrats in Congress have proposed a fund that would pay a worker up to two-thirds of his or her monthly wages for 12 weeks to care for a new child or an elderly family member. California, New Jersey and Rhode Island have expanded their state disability insurance programs to cover family leave. The Obama administration has offered grants for other states to study how they might also offer the benefit.

In Maryland, Del. Heather Mizeur proposed a paid family leave program modeled on California’s during her unsuc-

cessful campaign this year for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. In California, a portion of the state payroll tax paid by employees goes into a fund. Eligible workers on family leave can draw on that fund to cover a portion of their salary.

Del. Ariana Kelly, a Montgomery County Democrat, says she wants to bring the idea to the House floor.

“The birth of a child is one of the leading causes for a poverty spell,” Kelly says. “For all types of families it’s incredibly important.”

Jerid Kurtz, a spokesman for Lt. Gov. See **LEAVE**, page 19



LLOYD FOX/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTO

Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz said of the possibilities for the Sparrows Point site. “We have something very special here.”

## SUMMARY OF THE NEWS

### MARYLAND

**CLANCY ESTATE DISPUTE:** The widow of Baltimore author Tom Clancy is battling her late husband’s lawyer over \$6 million in taxes she says she shouldn’t owe on her share of Clancy’s \$82 million estate. Alexandra Clancy is seeking to oust Baltimore lawyer J.W. Thompson “Topper” Webb as executor of Tom Clancy’s will, accusing him of a mistake that adds to her estate tax bill. **NEWS PG 2**

### TODAY’S WEATHER

**PARTLY SUNNY AND MILD**

**72** HIGH **59** LOW

Cloudy on Saturday **SPORTS PG 16**



GUY WILLEY PHOTO

The Delmarva fox squirrel, the largest of all tree squirrels, was found in just 10 percent of its former range when it was declared endangered in 1967.

## ‘Squirrel man’ helps bring a restoration victory to Shore

Delmarva fox squirrel is now considered recovered, thanks largely to Guy Willey

By **TIMOTHY B. WHEELER**  
The Baltimore Sun

CAMBRIDGE — When Guy W. Willey Sr. was growing up, he hunted and ate Delmarva fox squirrels in the low-lying forests of the Eastern Shore, long before it was clear the giant cousins of the common gray squirrel were in danger of disappearing. He was “dirt poor,” he recalled, and lots of folks did it back then.

Now, at 83, he’s been invited to Black-

water National Wildlife Refuge today, when federal officials are expected to announce the squirrel has bounced back from the brink of extinction and is no longer in need of legal protection.

It’s a rare success story in the federal government’s nearly 50-year effort to protect endangered species, and much of the credit goes to Willey, who’s spent more than four decades laboring to protect and restore the creatures to a portion of their historic range on the Eastern Shore.

“He’s Mr. Delmarva Fox Squirrel,” said Glenn D. Therres, associate director of the wildlife and heritage service of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. “He was a really good ambassador for the” See **SQUIRREL**, page 19

# Delmarva fox squirrel makes rebound

**SQUIRREL**, From page 1

squirrel locally, and he was our man on the ground. ...

"The locals called him 'the squirrel man.'" ...

"Guy has been a major contributor to the squirrel's recovery," agreed Cherry Keller, a federal wildlife biologist in Annapolis who for the last 15 years has overseen the federal-state effort. "He grew up on this land and knows its history, the people who live here, and he knows squirrels."

Willey spent more than 30 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and then worked for another couple decades as a contractor to the state, helping to restore the fox squirrel population.

He is quick to credit the contributions of Therres, Keller and others. But he estimates he was personally involved in trapping at least 80 percent of the animals that were moved to reoccupy parts of the Delmarva Peninsula where they'd once lived.

"I'm no star at all," he said. "I was the guy who got all the chiggers and ticks and poison ivy."

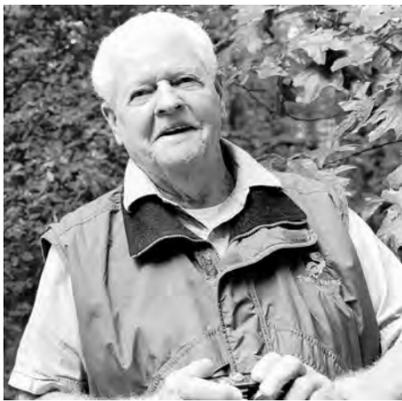
The silver-gray Delmarva fox squirrel, the largest of all the tree squirrels, can grow to 30 inches — half of that, tail — and weigh up to 3 pounds.

Quieter and slower than other squirrels, it prefers to live in mature forests among maple, oak and pine trees. It spends considerable time foraging for nuts and seeds on the ground, though it's also known to roam into nearby farm fields for corn and soybeans.

Once found on the peninsula from Delaware to Virginia, by the early 20th century its range had shrunk to the Maryland shore. Biologists believe it began a steep decline after World War II as a result of intensive logging wiping out its forest habitat — and hunting.

"It wasn't the best eating squirrel — it was tough," Willey said. But in the 1930s and '40s, his family didn't have much, so "we ate whatever the hell we could get."

Willey went to work for the federal



BARBARA HADDOCK TAYLOR/SUN PHOTO

Guy W. Willey Sr. of Cambridge estimates that he was involved in trapping at least 80 percent of Delmarva fox squirrels for relocation during the more than 40-year effort.

wildlife service in 1945, after he graduated from high school.

By the time the squirrel was declared endangered in 1967, it could be found in only 10 percent of its former range. The Blackwater refuge harbored most of the survivors.

Starting in the 1970s, Willey and other federal and state wildlife personnel began trapping and moving some of the Dorchester squirrels. Many of the "translocations," as officials called them, were from — and to — privately owned land, which required getting the owners' consent.

"He pretty much knew damned near every landowner in the county," Therres recalled. "They knew him, they trusted him. He's just a good old boy."

Even so, some landowners weren't eager to hear Willey tell them they had endangered squirrels on their property, and others were "nervous," as he put it, about hosting relocated animals.

"I got a lot of cussing," he said.

The Endangered Species Act has drawn opposition from farmers, ranchers and

other property owners, who complain about the inability to develop or alter their land after the discovery of a protected creature.

Therres said it was Willey's down-home diplomacy and a flexible attitude that smoothed the way for the squirrel relocation effort. Landowners were still allowed to cut down trees, the state official said, as long as they left 15 percent to 25 percent of them undisturbed for the squirrels.

Eddie Taylor, manager of Andelot Farm near Worton in Kent County, said he volunteered after watching a Maryland Public Television show about the squirrel recovery effort. Roughly half of the nearly 3,000-acre farm is forested.

"They've done exceptionally well. I've got them all over the farm now," said Taylor. He said the only precaution he's had to take is driving slowly, because unlike other squirrels, the animals — some as big as a housecat — aren't especially quick to get out of the way of vehicles.

Recovery has taken decades — partly, Therres said, because the squirrels have been slow to expand their numbers and range.

"They do sleep in," Willey said of the squirrels. "They don't come out until about 10 a.m."

There have been occasional clashes.

In the late 1990s, environmentalists sued the federal wildlife service over its approval of a housing development in Queen Anne's County. The lawsuit was unsuccessful, but the service did require the developer to leave most of the woods on the 57-acre housing tract unharmed, and to protect another 31-acre block of woods elsewhere.

John E. "Ned" Gerber, director of Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, a plaintiff in the suit, credited federal officials with requiring a "habitat conservation plan" of the developer. But he said squirrels have since disappeared from the woods near the homes, and he questioned whether the Delmarva fox squirrels are abundant enough to withstand the gradual erosion of

their habitat by development.

The squirrels now occupy about 28 percent of their historic range, according to federal wildlife biologists, who consider that enough to declare the species recovered. But Gerber said legal protection shouldn't be lifted until the animals have returned to half or more of the area on which they once lived.

"If you thought you had a 28 percent chance of passing an exam or of holding onto your job, you [wouldn't] say, 'Hey, this is Easy Street!'" Gerber said. "It's too soon."

Federal officials say the animals' population is large and dispersed enough to survive.

Willey said the squirrels have proven more adaptable than many expected. Driving his pickup near his home on the southern outskirts of Cambridge this week, he pointed out a couple of wooded tracts bordered by homes, a school and a park where he said he knows there are still Delmarva fox squirrels.

The biggest threat he sees now, he said, is cars.

Today, Willey plans to join U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, federal wildlife service director Dan Ashe, Gov. Martin O'Malley and other dignitaries at the wildlife refuge for what officials called "an important milestone in the ongoing recovery efforts for the Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel." A formal proposal to de-list the animal is expected to follow.

For Willey, it's a curtain call to a career dedicated to conservation. While with the federal wildlife service, he also worked to restore the iconic bald eagle, which was removed from the endangered species list in 2007.

But that was a nationwide effort that involved legions of people. The Delmarva fox squirrel has been a longer, local, much more personal crusade.

"That's the cap," he said. "After this, there's nothing else."

"Unless," he added, "I work on quail." [tim.wheeler@baltsun.com](mailto:tim.wheeler@baltsun.com)

## DEATH / LODGE NOTICES

### LEWENZ, BJ (Betty Jane)

Please join us Sat 9/20 at 2pm celebrate the life of BJ LEWENZ (1922-5.23.2014.) A memorial starts at 2pm, the Church of the Good Shepherd, 1401 Carrollton Ave, Ruxton, 21204. (Her ashes will be interred in 2015.)

Preceded in death by husband Hans in 1987, BJ is survived by sons Hans Curtis (& Hana Sullivan) of Cantil, CA; Claude (& Gabrielle J.), & granddaughter Micaela of Waihike, New Zealand; daughter Lisa of Baltimore; & many cherished nieces/nephews, & friends.

Donations accepted in her honor: Poe Baltimore, Inc. PO Box 23773, Baltimore, MD 21203 OR Conservation International, 2011 Crystal Dr, Arlington, VA 22202. Obit: [http://www.balTIMOREsun.com/news/obituaries/bs-md-ob-betty-lewenz-20140606\\_0\\_2082287.story](http://www.balTIMOREsun.com/news/obituaries/bs-md-ob-betty-lewenz-20140606_0_2082287.story)

### MARGOLIS, Joel

On September 17, 2014, Joel Margolis; beloved husband of Jean Margolis (nee Gerstein); devoted father of Dr. John (Barbara) Margolis, Zell Margolis, Gary Margolis (Elyse Geber); dear brother of Jules Margolis and the late Edward Margolis and Emma Margolis; loving grandfather of Sara (Elliot) Schiffer and Dr. Erin Margolis; loving great grandfather of Walt Schiffer.

Services at SOL LEVINSON & BROS., INC., 8900 Reisterstown Road, at Mount Wilson Lane, on Friday, September 19, at 11 am. Interment Moses Montefiore Woodmoor Hebrew Cemetery - Washington Blvd. Please omit flowers. Contributions in his memory may be sent to Chimes Foundation, 4814 Seton Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215. In mourning at 7 Slade Ave - Apt # 704, Baltimore, MD 21208. [www.sollevinson.com](http://www.sollevinson.com)

### MARGOLIS, Joel

The Moses Montefiore Anshe Emenah congregational family regrets the passing of our member, Joel Margolis, beloved husband of Jean and extends deepest sympathy to the family. Joel was a past President and Chairman of the Board.

### MULLAN, Paul A.

On September 14, 2014; Paul A. Mullan, cherished husband of Carol A. Mullan (nee Kennedy), beloved father of the late Paul E. Mullan, loving brother-in-law of Edward J. Kennedy and his wife Betty. Also survived by numerous nieces, nephews and close personal friends.

Friends may call at the family owned Ruck Towson Funeral Home, Inc. 1050 York Rd. (beltway exit 26) on Friday 3-5 & 7-9 PM. A Funeral Mass will be held at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen on Saturday at 11 AM. Interment St. Mary of the Assumption Cemetery (Govans). In lieu of flowers, family prefers contributions be made in Paul's name to Loyola University Office of Advancement, 4501 N. Charles St. Balt. MD 21210, Stella Maris, 2300 Dulany Valley Rd. Timonium MD 21093 or The Charity of Your Choice. [www.ruckfuneralhomes.com](http://www.ruckfuneralhomes.com).

### PAYNE, Percy Samuel Jr.

PAYNE, JR. On September 15, 2014; Percy Samuel Payne, Jr.

On Sunday, friends may call at VAUGHN C. GREENE FUNERAL SERVICES (West), 5151 Baltimore Nat'l Pike from 2-6:00 PM. On Monday, Mr. Payne, Jr. will lie in state at the New Genesis Total Praise Center, 314 N. Gilmor Street (21223), where the family will receive friends from 11:00-11:30AM with services to follow. Inquiries to (410) 233-2400.



### REESE, Doris Elizabeth

On September 17, 2014 Doris Elizabeth Reese; beloved wife of the late John R. Reese, Sr.; devoted mother of Kathy Tamburo and her husband Anthony and John R. Reese, Jr.; loving grandmother of Jaclyn, Joseph and John. Also survived by numerous nieces and nephews, preceded in death by her nine siblings. Mrs. Reese was retired from the Board of Education Certification Dept. at Greenwood.

Friends may call at the family owned Ruck Towson Funeral Home, Inc. 1050 York Road (Beltway Exit 26A) on Saturday from 7-9pm and Sunday 3-5 and 7-9pm. A Funeral Service will be held on Monday at 10:30am. Entombment Dulany Valley Memorial Gardens. [www.ruckfuneralhomes.com](http://www.ruckfuneralhomes.com)

### REINHARDT JR., Marvin "Dumpy"

7/27/52 - 8/24/2014. Survived by: Father Marvin Reinhardt Sr., Siblings: Tinker, Michael & Roger Daughter Tracey Reinhardt Adkins, Granddaughter's: Allison, Kylie & Katelynn. Preceded by his Mother Gail Reinhardt. Send condolences to 31884 Downing Rd. Delmar, Md 21875

### SERKIN, Donald

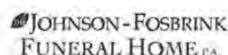
J.W.V Post 888 regrets to announce the passing of our member Donald Serkin and extend sincere sympathy to his family.

Louis Seidel  
Past Commander

### SHELLEY, Judy M.

On September 17, 2014 JUDY M. SHELLEY, beloved mother of Judy Schroeder, JoAnn Shelley and Jerri S. Nolet. Loving grandmother of Jessica Zirpoli, Andrea Zirpoli, Matthew Schroeder and Emily Schroeder.

Friends may call at The Johnson-Fosbrink Funeral Home P.A., 8521 Loch Raven Blvd. (beltway exit 29B) on Saturday from 9 to 11a.m.; where all are invited to attend a Catholic Prayer Service at 11:00 a.m. Interment in Dulany Valley Memorial Gardens. Donations may be made to the American Heart Association through the Virginia Tech Men's Lacrosse Team via <http://heartwalk.kintera.org/roanokeva/virginatechmenslacrosse>. Condolences may be sent to [www.jfthmd.com](http://www.jfthmd.com).



### VALENTINE, Kit Joylon

Died on Sept 15th at home; survived by wife, Rebecca Bellis Valentine, 4 Children, and 10 grandchildren. Service on Saturday 9/20/14 2pm at Crossroads Church of the Nazarene. Donations can be made to The Kit Valentine Intern Scholarship Fund C/O Patapsco Heritage Greenway or the Wounded Warrior Project on behalf of Kit Valentine.

### WEIKERT, ROBERT M.

On September 16, 2014 Robert Martin Weikert beloved husband of Eleanor Wright Weikert; dear father of Jeffrey M. Weikert, M. Katherine Weikert and Deborah W. Noon; devoted father-in-law of Maureen Houle Weikert, Irwin M. Fried and Kevin J. Noon. Also survived by five grandchildren.

A Memorial Service will be held Saturday at 11 AM at Ascension Lutheran Church. Entombment private. Please omit flowers. Memorials in his name may be made to Oak Crest Benevolent Fund 8800 Walther Blvd. Baltimore, MD 21234 or Ascension Lutheran Church 7601 York Rd. Baltimore, MD 21204. Arrangements by the family-owned MITCHELL-WIEDEFELD FUNERAL HOME INC.

[www.mwfuneralhome.com](http://www.mwfuneralhome.com)

### WERKING, Mildred

On September 17, 2014, Mildred N. "Millie" Werking, beloved wife of the late John W. Werking, Jr., loving mother of Rudolph and John Gondeck and Robert W. Werking, cherished grandmother of 8. Friends may call Friday 2-4 & 6-8 p.m., at the Slack Funeral Home, P.A., 3871 Old Columbia Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21043. Funeral Services from the above funeral home Saturday 11 a.m. Interment St. Johns Cemetery. In lieu of flowers contributions may be directed to the Animal Welfare Society of Howard County, 8556 Davis Rd., Columbia, MD 21045 ([www.awshc.org](http://www.awshc.org)) or the Hospice of Washington County, 747 Northern Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21742 ([www.hospiceofwc.org](http://www.hospiceofwc.org)). Please see [www.slackfuneralhome.com](http://www.slackfuneralhome.com) for online condolences and directions.

### YOUNG, Nancy S.

Suddenly on September 14, 2014, Nancy S. Young (nee Skalstad) of Brooklyn. Beloved wife of Linwood A. Young. Dearest sister of Regina Myers and the late John, Wayne, Jackie and Shirley. Also survived by many loving nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends at the family-owned and operated MCCULLY-POLYNIACK FUNERAL HOME, P.A., 237 E. Patapsco Ave. (Brooklyn), on Saturday from 2 to 5 PM, at which time Prayers will be offered. Cremation following. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in her memory to the American Heart Association. Online condolences may be sent to [www.mccullyfuneral.com](http://www.mccullyfuneral.com)

### ZINN, Rebecca Lynn

On September 17, 2014, Rebecca Lynn Zinn (nee Hunter); beloved wife of Stanford Zinn; cherished godmother of Jesse Hunter; devoted sister of Harold (Ann) Hunter, Jr., Laura Hunter Schlimme (Carville Schlimme), Jeffrey (Barbara) Hunter, and the late Leslie Hunter; dear sister-in-law of Arlette (James) Hurt, Harlan (Amanda) Zinn, Randall (Diana) Zinn, and Douglas Zinn; beloved aunt of Jeremy (Jennifer) Zinn, Ian Zinn, Hannah Zinn, Christina Hunter, Danielle Levi and Naomi Levi. Services at SOL LEVINSON & BROS., INC., 8900 Reisterstown Road, at Mount Wilson Lane on Friday, September 19, at 1 pm. Interment Baltimore Hebrew Cemetery - Berrymans Lane. Please omit flowers. Contributions in her memory may be sent to Johns Hopkins Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center, 100 North Charles Street, Suite 234, Baltimore, MD 21201. In mourning at 2410 Velvet Valley Way, Owings Mills, MD 21117.

[www.sollevinson.com](http://www.sollevinson.com)

# Call for paid maternal leave growing louder

**LEAVE**, From page 1

Anthony G. Brown, the Democratic nominee for governor, directed a reporter to campaign materials in which Brown speaks of extending family leave opportunities to more Marylanders and working with "stakeholders" to "identify a paid family leave benefit in the future."

Adam Dubitsky, a spokesman for Republican nominee Larry Hogan, said Hogan supports existing family leave law, but would work to put Marylanders back to work, rein in "reckless" spending, and roll back tax hikes approved by Gov. Martin O'Malley "before considering new funds or further complicating the tax code."

Business owners have resisted government regulations around employee leave. Both the Maryland Chamber of Commerce and the National Federation of Independent Business say they would fight any legislation that required employers to keep paying workers who are out on leave.

But representatives say they might entertain a plan funded by employees.

Deriece Pate Bennett, a lobbyist for the Chamber of Commerce, said she hadn't heard of the California model. She said chamber members "would definitely be open to the conversation to see what that would entail."

Jessica Cooper, director of the state chapter of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, said the small companies she represents "are always eager to talk about ideas."

Wanda Smith, president and CEO of the staffing agency Symphony Placements in Cockeysville, is skeptical. She said paid family leave sounds good in theory, but she sees a slippery slope.

"Being a business in this state, I can assure you the state of Maryland will find a way to assess every employer a higher payroll tax or another tax geared toward that," she said. "They'd have to figure out a way to get the money."

Under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, eligible workers at companies of more than 50 employees may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid family leave per year. They may use paid vacation and sick time, if they have any, to continue earning money. They also keep their health insurance coverage, and their job is held for their return.

The Maryland Parental Leave Act, signed by O'Malley in May, requires companies with 15 to 50 employees to offer six weeks of unpaid family leave.

But some companies have policies that go further.

Bank of America, where Smith works, offers employees 12 weeks of paid leave, followed by up to 14 weeks of unpaid leave, a spokeswoman said, for a total of 26 weeks.

"It's part of our effort to be a great place to work and help employees meet the diverse needs of their families," spokeswoman Ferris Morrison said.

This year, the professional services firm KPMG expanded the number of weeks of paid leave it offers from 12 to 18, according to DeJuana Small, a human resources manager for the company.

"We feel like our employees are worth the investment," she said.

When M&T Bank marketing manager Elizabeth Rhodes gave birth to her son William last year, her employer covered the difference between her short-term disabili-

ty insurance payments and her full salary for four weeks.

She said the extra money eased the financial burden of her leave and allowed her to focus on her family.

"It was nice and a great benefit and shows, I think, how M&T values employees and wants to give back to employees," she said.

Jennifer Swanberg, a professor at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, said paid family leave programs increase a worker's job satisfaction.

"It helps with employee engagement," she said. "It puts [employees] at ease with economic security."

Vicki Shabo, vice president of the National Partnership for Women and Families, said paid family leave is "good for families, good for businesses and good for the economy."

"It keeps employees happy and engaged, and reduces the cost of turnover," she said. "We're losing ground in terms of women participating in the workforce, but if we put policies in place to help women stay, we would add a significant amount to our [gross domestic product] as a country."

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, both Democrats, have proposed legislation to create a federal paid family leave program that they say would work something like Social Security.

Employers and employees would pay into a fund. An employee taking leave to care for a new child or an elderly family member could draw on the fund to cover 66 percent of lost wages, capped at a monthly limit, for up to 12 weeks.

"It is shocking that the United States is the only industrialized nation in the world that doesn't offer paid maternity leave," Gillibrand said. "Choosing between your loved ones and your career and your future is a choice no family should have to make any longer."

Business groups say paying workers who are out on leave can be expensive, particularly for small businesses.

"If you have a handful of employees, and one's out, you have a few options," said Jack Mozloom, spokesman for the state chapter of the National Federation of Independent Businesses. "You can allow the work to go unfinished ... you can shift someone else to do their work ... or you can hire a temp or pay overtime, in which case you're paying double for the same labor."

New parents Matt Stubbs and Hannah Gardi, whose employers don't provide paid family leave, used vacation and sick time to cobble together 11 weeks home with their daughter Adalyn.

Stubbs said the time helped strengthen their bond with the child.

"Hopefully [it] helps her develop into a fantastic individual," he said.

But medical assistant Louise Blazucki went back to work just six weeks after giving birth last year to her daughter Margaret. As a part-time employee, she doesn't qualify for the 12 weeks guaranteed by the Family and Medical Leave Act.

She said she would have taken more time off if she could.

Her daughter was "just barely human" at 6 weeks old, she said. "You're leaving this tiny little bundle and hoping you don't feel too guilty about it and they don't miss you too much."

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