The lack of paid sick days has severe consequences for educators and the children they serve. Many educators have shared stories about the challenges they face when students and their families are sick. Here are some examples:

**Danita M., Austin, TX**
I’ve had students come to class with high fevers, chills, body aches, vomiting, and whooping cough, who tell me they can’t stay home because their parents have to work. I’ve seen an administrator get fired for taking too much time to care for her extremely ill daughter, leaving her with a child with serious illness and no income to pay the medical bills and living expenses.

I’ve seen a single mother teacher struggle weekly with childcare arrangements for her two young sons after using her PTO on bed rest and having a baby in the NICU five months before her husband abandoned her and her children. I’ve cared for my son when he was extremely ill, having caught something from a classmate whose parent was forced to send them to school to go to work. Without paid sick days, the foundational structures of our country -- families, schools, our medical system, and our economy -- are undermined, negatively impacting our entire society.

**Kim O., Missoula, MT**
As a full-time public school teacher and single mother, I am grateful for my paid sick days. But day after day, I see my own students struggle through a school day when they should be home in bed sick, not at a school desk. But their parents must be at work, because they don’t have the same job benefits as me. We are also talking about a serious public health issue as well -- flu viruses spreading rampantly when sick employees are at work, and sick students are at school.

**Jennifer V., Placitas, NM**
I am an adjunct instructor at Central New Mexico Community College. We finally received paid sick days thanks to our union’s diligence. Prior to this, I would go to work ill and even worse, send my child to school ill and contagious. I had no choice. The bills simply would not get paid if I took ‘the pleasure’ of staying home. I still hear the same sad story from my students; of having to send sick children to school or being wiped out for class because they had no other choice but to go to work sick.

**Anita M., Worcester, MA**
Although I do get paid sick days as a faculty member in a school system, many of my students’ parents have lost their jobs because of the time they had to take off to care for their families when sick.

This significantly impacts their child’s ability to have safe and secure housing, nutrition, and adequate clothing. Without these basics, they do not come to school ready to learn and spend a lot of time in the nurses’ or guidance office. These are real situations that are far too common.

**Mary D., Roslindale, MA**
I am a teacher, and I watch wave of sickness after sickness pass through my students and colleagues. When I ask clearly sick, clearly not functioning students why they are staying in class instead of going home, the most frequent answer is that no one at home can afford to leave work to take them home. So, instead, the sick kids bring the illnesses to school and spread them.

I have an immune-compromised student who essentially misses at least a third of every school year because he can’t come to school without getting sick. A colleague keeps missing opportunities to visit her cancer patient mother in the hospital because of the level of sickness at school. This is a solvable problem. We need sick parents and children to stay home for the sake of our whole society.

**Esther J., Clewiston, FL**
I taught middle school for 30 years. Most days brought a sick child to school – a child that should have been home in bed, making the classroom a hotbed for illness. Most of these sick children brought in illnesses that were contagious and the rest of us got sick as a result.

Had these children’s parents had paid sick days, they would have been at home taking care of their sick children. Paid sick days would help to cut down on the spread of illnesses like measles, chicken pox, and the flu.

Studies show that sick children recover better when cared for by their parents. Among children with serious illnesses, the presence of a parent shortens a child’s hospital stay by 31 percent.

Nationwide, parents without paid sick days are more than twice as likely as parents with paid sick days to send a sick child to school or daycare. They are also five times as likely to take a child or family member to an emergency room because they cannot take time off during their work day.


Susan T., Claremont, NH
As a teacher, I tell my students to stay home when they are sick. Not all of them can, as there is no parent that is able to take time off of work to stay with them. Please make this situation obsolete!

Rory R., Leesburg, FL
For many years as a teacher, I got sick from being among students who needed to be home in bed. Their parents were not able to find someone to take care of their children, and they themselves could not stay home with them since they had no paid sick days.
So I got sick, my other students got sick, and we passed our illnesses back and forth. Not very productive. Everyone should have access to paid sick days.

Andrea D., West Roxbury, MA
This is a no-brainer. As a mom, but most especially as a teacher, I have seen the havoc that a lack of sick days can have on a student, a family, and on the rest of a school community who get infected by sick students who shouldn't be in school but who are there because their parents can't take time off to care for them. Let's change this!!

Sara D., Independence, MO
As a single parent and educator, I know first-hand how the lack of paid sick leave affects our families. The question is, why can we not do this as other developed nations have?

Katya G., Providence, RI
As a teacher, I often see sick kids in school because no one can stay home to care for them. This hurts everyone.

Kathryn G., Southern Pines, NC
I'm an educator and I see kids every day who are too sick to be in school, but get sent anyway because parents have no choice!

Patricia M., St. Louis, MO
I was a St. Louis public school teacher. We were "allowed" 10 sick days a year BUT if we took 6 or more, we were marked "Unsatisfactory"!
As a single mom of 2 boys with severe allergies, I ONLY stayed home when THEY were sick. So I taught many times with migraines. I could hardly stand up.

Constance E., Suffern, NY
As a former school teacher, I appreciate allowing workers to stay home when they are sick and still get their pay. As a teacher, I always stayed home so I would not sicken my students.
However, many children are sent to school because their parents will not receive pay if they stay home and care for their children.

Dorothy C., Petaluma, CA
As a long time teacher, I know what it is like to have kids sent to school while ill, exposing everyone else to the illness. Parents without paid sick leave have no other choice!

Laura B., Boston, MA
As a classroom aide, I know first-hand how parents often send sick children to school to sit in a nurses office rather than take a day to stay home, because they have no paid sick days. This is a crisis that is fairly easily solved!

Maureen K., East Longmeadow, MA
As a fourth grade teacher of twenty years, I've seen a lot of suffering among children come to school sick. Not only did the sick ones suffer, but also classmates who often caught the disease and either missed school or came to school perpetuating the illness cycle.

Barb K., Montevideo, MN
As an elementary school social worker, I see the toll it takes on parents to have to choose between sending a sick child to school, hoping they make it through the day, and losing income from a lost day of work.

Frances D., Goldsboro, NC
As a teacher, I want my students to stay home when they're sick. But if their parents can't take time off to care for them, they come to school and infect everyone!

Tani L., Minneapolis, MN
As a first grade teacher I find that parents send very sick kids to school all too often. It is frequently because the parents have no sick days from work to care for their children.