EARNED SICK DAYS = A WIN-WIN-WIN FOR WORKING FAMILIES

BUSINESSES & THE ECONOMY

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It’s a fact of life – germs exist and people get sick. Those are things we can’t change.

What we can change is the fact that the United States remains the only developed nation in the world without the guaranteed ability to earn paid sick days.

The United States’ lack of access to earned sick days is hurting our nation’s families and our economy. In fact, lack of access to earned sick time is hurting businesses; and is also costing people jobs, causing them to lose wages and making it harder for people to care for their families.

The impact is staggering. Employees coming to work sick (i.e. presenteeism) because they don’t have earned sick days costs the national economy $160 billion annually due to lost productivity. [1] And right now, nearly one in three workers – and 70% of low-wage workers – in our nation don’t have a single earned sick day to care for their own health and millions more don’t have earned sick days to care for a sick child. [2] One in five women with children report that they or a family member have been fired or disciplined by an employer for taking time off to cope with an illness or to care for a sick child or family member.

Without the ability to earn paid sick days, working families are too often faced with the impossible choice of sending a sick kid to school and going to work sick— or staying home and losing an invaluable day’s pay, or sometimes even losing their job. These lost wages add up quickly: For an average family without earned sick days, just 3.5 days of missed work is the equivalent to an entire month of groceries. [3]

Earned sick days are one of the best tools we have for keeping people in the jobs they need, boosting wages, supporting businesses, and ensuring working people can support their families.

Businesses, both big and small, are lifted by earned sick days too. They reduce turnover costs, boost workplace morale, and help stop the spread of illness among workers. [4]

With these facts in mind, it’s not surprising that unprecedented support for earned sick days is growing across the nation. Over forty locations – cities, counties and states – have already passed this policy for their residents and workers. But access to earned sick days shouldn’t depend on your zip code – we need a national earned sick days standard!

Together with raising the minimum wage, paid family & medical leave, and equal pay, earned sick days help ensure that all families and communities can thrive.

Please take a moment to read the stories in this book from the front lines of motherhood that illustrate just how critical earned sick days are to businesses and families in our nation.

Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner  
Executive Director, MomsRising.org

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### Personal stories from MomsRising members about the importance of access to paid sick days.

#### ALABAMA

I have paid sick time from my employer now, but I remember having to show up for work sick in a previous occupation – as a waitress!

- *Kay S, Hoover, AL*

As a working mother of a 3 year old and the primary wage earner for my family - the need for paid sick leave is absolutely essential for physical and mental health.

- *Hanne H, Birmingham, AL*

I worked in food service for about ten years. The majority of workers in the food service industry do not have sick days. Coupled with low wages, taking a day off because of illness can become an unaffordable luxury. As a worker, I prepared and served a lot of food while ill. I probably made some people sick in the process.

- *Amanda H, Huntsville, AL*

My husband got a sinus infection in the fall. Because he does not have paid sick days, he did not go to the doctor for almost a week, until it was unbearable. This led to him needing four different medications because it was so severe.

### In November 2016, by a margin of 20 points, Arizona voters approved a ballot initiative establishing workers’ ability to earn paid sick days on the job.


#### Arizona

Single parents like my daughter cannot afford to lose a day’s wages to care for her sick daughters.

- *Darlene C, Tucson, AZ*

#### In November 2016, by a margin of 20 points, Arizona voters approved a ballot initiative establishing workers’ ability to earn paid sick days on the job.

Evolution of paid sick leave laws: 2016

- *ARIZONA*

#### ALASKA

Most of the poor people I know are partially in their current situation because of a combination of medical bills and a corporate culture that treats a sick or injured human being like a broken tool to be discarded as soon as possible. I've worked in a lot of kitchens, and you don't want to know the shape some of the people who cook your food are in because they don't get sick days.

- *Emma E, Fairbanks, AK*

He ended up being out of work for three days, which sent us into a downward financial spiral.

We were forced to pay our rent late, which added a large late fee. For over two months, we were trying to catch up and having to make tough decisions, like whether to keep the lights on or to go to the grocery store. Paid sick days can make all the difference in the world to a family like mine.

- *Marissa G, Huntsville, AL*

#### ARIZONA

Single parents like my daughter cannot afford to lose a day’s wages to care for her sick daughters.

- *Darlene C, Tucson, AZ*

I don’t know how many times I’ve gotten sick because parents have sent their...
sick kids to school. They couldn’t take off work to keep them home because of not having no sick leave.

- E. M, Mesa, AZ

I have been on both sides of the fence. Arizona is a “right to work” state, which means your employer has a right to fire you at virtually any moment unless you have a written contract. Unfortunately I’ve worked for cruel 1%-ers where I feared missing any work at all due to possible repercussions. It cost me, both when my child was ill, and when I was ill and dragged myself to work anyway. Thankfully, my final career years were spent in a County position that had some sick time available (but commingled with vacation time--thanks, Arizona). Then at least I was able to take days off when needed to attend to health problems. No person, especially a single parent, should have to fear losing their job due to illness. That is just wrong. Fix it!

- Patty B, Kingman, AZ

Recently, my niece had the flu. As an RNBA, she has no sick days. To protect the patients in the hospital where she works, she had to use a personal vacation day. Many other nurses reported to work even though they also had the flu.

- Diane B, Oro Valley, AZ

As a Pediatrician, I know the importance of allowing sick people time off to rest at home and prevent their illness from infecting other people at work. I am in support of paid sick days for this and many other reasons.

- Ann J, Tucson, AZ

The company I worked for had mandatory 97% attendance or you’re fired; no sick leave... so I went to work sick, we all did. People vomiting into trash cans between calls. Not pretty folks. And, if we didn’t have help at home, our kids went to school sick too. How stupid is that?

- Nancy C, Mayer, AZ

My parenting days of missing work due to a sick child at home have ended. But the need of million of families with one parent or both parents working to support the household are ongoing. Many families need a full paycheck with the coverage of paid sick days. Make the right choice. Paid sick days for the working class.

- Marcia J, Scottsdale, AZ

When I was a working mother I was lucky to have paid sick leave and to occasionally use it to stay home with a sick youngster. Sick children belong at home not in school infecting other children, but parents without sick leave cannot stay home with them.

- Patricia G, Tucson, AZ

If I don’t work, I don’t get paid. If I don’t get paid, my family has less to eat, less for things we need. I go to work no matter what. I have gone to work after surgery for skin cancer when I should have had more time to recover at home. I’ve gone to work when I really haven’t felt well. I worry about Jury Duty because if called to serve and if I take off work, I don’t get paid.

- Debbie S, Tucson, AZ

I am the sole caretaker for my elderly mother with dementia. My job is physically grueling and I work with the public so I get sick frequently. I was recently out for 3 days and was told I had to make up the lost days in my next pay period or I would lose my employer provided insurance. Now I’m working double shifts, can’t take care of Mom and getting sicker!

- Rebecca L, Tucson, AZ

We need paid sick leave for everyone. My granddaughter just lost her job because of this. She and her two children had pneumonia. End of job! She could have gone back to work and given pneumonia to all the workers and patients in the dental office. She chose not to and lost her job. No paid sick days equals a public health hazard!

- Cheryl H, Glendale, AZ

I started a new job and within the month my partner was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. We have 2 young children and I have consumed sick time, vacation, and leave with out pay, to care for my family. My partner cannot be around sick children and is unwell himself. I often have to take time off because my arranged child care provider is ill, one of my children is ill, or my partner becomes unexpectedly sicker.

I use my sick days. I recognize I would have been disciplined, fired or quit had I not had a position that accrued sick and vacation time. People cannot control their children’s sickness or other family members.

- Patience M, Chandler, AZ

ARKANSAS

When I worked with children at a daycare for 5 years, I never once got a paid sick day. Not one. This is not okay.

- Krystle K, Conway, AR

I was sick as a dog but still had to work, as there weren’t any other employees to cover my shift. On top of that, I’m 34 weeks pregnant and had to find someone to look after my son because he’s just as sick as me. It’s difficult when a child can’t go to daycare!

- Deanna HalvHerson, Sherwood, AR

CALIFORNIA

I lost a very dear friend to cancer because she couldn’t afford to take time off work to see a doctor -- much less afford the time off for treatment, or the treatments themselves.

- Jo F, San Francisco, CA

I volunteer in my granddaughter’s school one day a week. One of the little boys I work with said his sister was sick and home alone because his mom had to go to work. His sister was 9 years old. His mom was a single parent. Having to go to work when your child is sick shouldn’t have to happen.

- Carol S, Berkeley, CA

I remember the days when I worked a minimum wage job with no benefits and I had two small children who had allergies and were often sick. It made an already economically difficult time even more difficult not to have paid sick days.

- Linda M, Culver City, 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!

- Dorothy C, Petaluma, CA

I feel so fortunate as I had paid sick days when I was mothering. Too many women and families do not and have to choose between leaving their children or hunger and unpaid bills. That is wrong. Period.

- Miriam L, Imperial Beach, CA

Even though I am retired, this impacts me directly, as I watch my granddaughters, ages 3 and soon-to-be 7 year old because my daughter and son-in-law have very little sick days.

Their oldest daughter has asthma and allergies and the 3-year-old has already been sick with 2 viruses and just started pre-school the end of August.

- Vivian P, Oakland, CA

As an elementary school teacher for 30 years, my colleagues and I could send sick children home but our own children got a pillow and a blanket under our desks.

- Paula F, Indio, CA

For those of us with children born too soon, with medical issues WAY beyond the norm, with disabilities like blindness and hearing loss (like my daughter), this issue is even MORE pressing.

- Graciela T, Hayward, CA

As a medical social worker, I see everyday in my work with patients just how crucial it is to have paid sick days for all workers.

- Dian N, San Francisco, CA

Many years ago when my children were young, I got docked for being sick and struggled to pay my bills. No mother [or father] should have to make the choice to have to come to work sick or get their paycheck docked.

- Margaret Y, Pinole, CA

As a physician, I believe that paid sick leave is crucial to my patients’ health, as I’ve seen far too many people working with injuries and illnesses and just getting worse and worse because they don’t have paid sick leave and can’t afford not to work.

- G M, Orange, CA

I taught for many years and had a lot of students whose parents would be fired if they had to take a sick child to the ER or stay home with them. Child care facilities will not accept a sick child. I had many sick children sent to school as a result. Extended families are spread out too far to help. My daughter was in a terrible car accident years ago and after my leave was up I had to stay off with no pay. Luckily I did not lose my job and my coworkers donated over a month of their sick leave to me.

- Carol M, Grand Terrace, CA

As a single mother, I do not know what I would have done when my two oldest daughters were young without the paid sick days I received at the university I worked for.

This helped me balance my work commitment with the vital parental commitment of being available to my girls in crucial moments.

- Berthena P, Ventura, CA

I personally do not worry about sick days, since I am a salaried worker at a large multi-national corporation. But I do worry about my 24 year old daughter who is an hourly worker and she does not get any paid sick days.

- Richard C, Oakley, CA

Beyond colds and flu, it should be noted that people with cancer and other serious diseases can wind up with life threatening conditions due to exposure to simple colds and flu bugs. These people would be served as well as the general population if we were not such a backward country regarding sick leave and health.

- Van T, Emerald Hills, CA

I own a very small company, but we’ve always offered each employee five paid sick days. Whatever happened to the Golden Rule?

- Marianne R, Venice, CA

I know the dread and pain of having to balance a job with sick children. This should

never be a question in this rich country.

- Jeannette H, Sacramento, CA

I am lucky enough to have paid sick days, but learned that my son, who lives in another state, does not. This is not fair to people who are paid hourly in small companies.

- Denise C, Yuba City, CA

The time is now for national paid sick days from all employers. I do not want to be standing in line at McDonalds or Walmart and have a sick cashier wait on me, passing their germs to me and my kids.

- Raymond H, Orangevale, CA

When I was working, I couldn’t afford to get sick & then take those germs home to my invalid mother; it would have cost me to pay for a caregiver if I wasn’t able to care for her.

- L A, Escondido, CA

I worked for many years for companies that had a reasonable number of sick days and I don’t know what I would have done without them. We were even allowed to transfer some of our accrued sick leave to another employee who had a major family crisis.

These policies retain good workers and make life better for both employees and dependents.

- Suzan S, Menlo Park, CA

This is an important issue that impacts hard working folks, often working two jobs, doing work we need and appreciate. Please support paid sick days. Thank you.

- Sheila J, Hayward, CA

I was a single mother & now so is my daughter. For any family, when a child is sick, a parent or caretaker must be with them since most places do not have a sick childcare facility.

This was & is a most important issue. I was lucky enough in my work & health of my children that I did not have to take off often to be with them but my daughter is not. I was able to get paid for it as I had PTO for it, but my daughter does not. This NEEDS to change!

- Evelyn D, Eureka, CA
Please support paid sick leave. I had to leave my young son alone to go to work when he was sick. I turned around and came back but my employer was very unhappy.

- Margaret Z, San Pedro, CA

I worked as a waitress for 30 years and I was not allowed to take a sick day. As a result, I served food to people while I had very bad colds. Who wants a sick server?

- Lucinda B, Stinson Beach, CA

I don’t know what I would have done without paid sick days when my kids were young. I hardly ever use them for myself, most times, but I did need surgery a few times, and would have been completely stressed without sick leave since I was the main bread winner in my family.

- Rita K, Los Angeles, CA

It is unthinkable that moms do not have paid sick leave. I was a DoDDS counselor for 44 years. I always had paid sick leave. If it is good enough for the US government it is good enough for American companies!

- Frankie N, Oakland, CA

As a working mother without sick days, I am a testament of how difficult it is to keep a good paying job and uphold my responsibilities as a mother. Like many women in the U.S. now, I am a high-wage earner than my husband and I am the primary parent; I am the one who makes and gets everyone to their appointments, takes care of everyone when they are sick, etc.

Please support families like mine and mothers like me to not have to choose between being a good employee and being a good parent by supporting paid sick days. Thank you.

- Shauna N, Hayward, CA

As a family therapist for children & their parents, I was vulnerable to every childhood illness imaginable; & I would have lost many paid days of work if I hadn’t had paid sick days. Many workers infect others without this necessary benefit.

- Jo H, San Rafael, CA

I’m an environmental scientist and a mom; right now I can stay home when I’m sick or my children are; it is a big deal!

- Joanna N, Santa Cruz, CA

As a former employer, the welfare of my employees was one of my top priorities. Happy, healthy workers are good workers.

- Luis L, Long Beach, CA

As a single mother, I felt it was so important to spend as much time with my kids in order for them to get the nurturing all kids need. I was lucky to have teaching as a profession with paid sick days, so, if they needed me at home with them when they were sick, I got to be there for them. No sending them to school to infect other kids, or bothering some other parent and infecting their house, I got to stay home and give them the loving care they needed. Now that I’m retired, I help out with my grandchildren, because my children don’t have sick leave. How sad if I wasn’t able to do that?

- Sandy M, Running Springs, CA

My wife was diagnosed with Crohn’s disease at 32 years of age last year. It’s atypical for this disease to reveal itself at such a late age, but it happened to us nonetheless. Her work offers her 10 days of PTO. That’s ten total days a year off, vacation and sick leave combined. Due to her illness, my wife often can have complications and needs bed rest. In fact, with just some simple rest at home, her symptoms often do not worsen, and she feels better faster. However, due to her company’s archaic leave system, a successful international franchise at that, she often has to decide whether to tough it out to save those precious vacation days.

It’s also worth noting that my wife is a Senior Research & Development scientist, so she is obviously an accomplished individual. It’s become clear to us that companies ignorantly often do not have the best interests of their employees by forcing them to make this decision that seem barbaric in modern society.

In fact, this business practice hurts profits by lowering worker morale, loyalty, 

On August 29, 2014, California voted to pass a statewide paid sick time law, becoming the second state in the country – after Connecticut – to guarantee paid sick time. Under the law, both private-sector and public workers are entitled to accrue and use up to 24 hours of paid sick time a year.

Three years after San Francisco’s ground-breaking Paid Sick Leave Ordinance took effect in 2007, 70% of employers reported no effect on profitability (another 15% said they didn’t know) and more than two-thirds of employers expressed support for the law.

and productivity. This has been presented to my wife’s employer, yet they stubbornly and stupidly refuse to change any policies. It’s the only reasonable effort to give Americans the freedom to live their lives in a healthy manner.

– Jared M, Los Angeles, CA

My son Brendan suffers from Asthma. I was faced a couple of times with threats of 3 days off without pay. Believe me, I could not afford being off 3 days without pay. I don’t understand why we here in America don’t have sick days. Please consider allowing sick days for working moms.

– Freddia W, San Diego, CA

For the entire ten years I was working in retail, it never failed; people would come into work sick because they couldn’t afford to lose a day’s pay. Inevitably, others would get sick, too. I never came through a cold season unscathed; a couple of times, I got some nasty flu bugs and once I got whooping cough.

– Sheryl I, Murrieta, CA

At the urging of a friend, I applied to and then was hired by the University of California after several times in a row the businesses I worked for reorganized or went under. As a single mother, I was now able to take sick days if my daughter was sick. Eventually my daughter grew up, and then the paid sick leave was available for times when I needed to care for my aging mother.

– Erin R, El Cerrito, CA

I had the good fortune of a job with paid sick time when my first child, Allie, was born. Even though she was born on time, and was seemingly healthy, we discovered later on that she was suffering from upper spinal torticollis due to placement/clamping in the womb. This required weekly therapy visits to stretch the muscles in her neck and shoulder. Even though we continued the work with her daily at home, she had to continue therapy for 4 months.

This would never have been possible for us if I was not given paid sick time, and the long-term effects of her torticollis would be even more pronounced than they are today. As it is, her face is placed slightly askew on her skull; with out weekly therapy, she likely would suffer from a curved spine, an uneven gait, or worse. It is so essential to treat congenital conditions aggressively as early on as possible. Paid sick time can help entire generations live up to their full potential!

– Kate B, Woodland, CA

As a pediatrician, a mother, and a citizen who works, I know how important it is for a parent to be able to stay home with a sick child, or to take sick days for him or herself. It is crucial for families to have the ability to earn paid sick time.

– Julie N, Ladera Ranch, CA

Having been an employee and an employer, I know how important it is to stay home when you’re sick or when your child is sick. No one can do good work when unwell, and it affects anyone with whom the sick person comes in contact.

– Kathleen G, Davis, CA

I am the owner of a small business. Even though 7 paid sick days a year for each of our 15 employees will be an additional large cost, it’s the right thing to do.

– Sarah W, Santa Barbara, CA

As a stroke survivor, I depended on accumulated sick days to help see us through my rehabilitation and recovery. Since I had my stroke at a relatively young age, I would hope that everyone had the opportunity that I did to earn paid sick days and use them not only to recover their own health, but to prevent co-workers from being affected by their illness.

– Bert S, Monrovia, CA

My daughter had a catastrophic medical incident (sudden cardiac arrest) 2 years ago. I was lucky enough that my employer had a good sick and family leave policy. My daughter was in the hospital for ~4 months (out of my home state). If this benefit was not available to me, I don’t know what I would have done, as it was tough enough as it was.

– Kit S, Beverly Hills, CA

Many years ago, I worked for a bank in Fallbrook. As an asthmatic suffering from pneumonia with 104 fever, I was ordered to drive in to work or lose my job! I’d been with the company for over 20 years! Needless to say my doctor went through the roof when he found out.

– L A, Escondido, CA

I’m the primary breadwinner for my family, as are many of my friends, and I would not have been able to afford my recent maternity leave without the paid family leave in California. Please extend this to ALL states! I’m a pediatrician and this really helps children as well.

– Suzanne, Mendez, CA

My grandson was recently diagnosed with foot and mouth disease and due to the highly contagious nature of this disease was unable to attend daycare while my daughter was at work. She was threatened that she could be fired if she took time off work to care for my grandson. This is just cruel and wrong.

– Sonia W, Sacramento, CA

I am a republican with strong conservative views and I think this is the fair thing for working families.

– Linda J, Fountain Valley, CA

I am a small business owner and I support paid sick days.

– KH F, San Diego, CA

In addition to being a mother, I am a Human Resources professional and it is rare when people abuse sick leave, if anything, I see the opposite where people are afraid to stay away so they come to work sick or bring their sick children to work!

Help support your workforce by encouraging wellness and a healthy work environment!

– Victoria S, San Francisco, CA

I have paid sick days in San Francisco, CA, and I use them!

– Mary M, San Francisco, CA

I have a compromised immune system, and I can’t afford to interact with service personnel who are actively contagious. They should be home recovering, and I should be safe from contagious illness.

– Marion B, San Diego, CA
I came down with all the most severe symptoms of a cold the second week of October. Fatigue, extreme sore throat, fluctuating body temps. My boss had had pneumonia about a year before, and is deathly worried of anyone getting sick and bringing germs to work.

I was able to take several days to heal properly thanks to the California mandate requiring all employers (I work at a small, very busy company with about 10 employees) to offer a minimum amount of days (or hours- depending on accounting method) PAID time off if ill to ALL employees (I work part-time). I now didn’t have to come to work somewhat better, but fully better, and be productive again, putting my boss at ease.

We absolutely can’t afford for me to have any unpaid time off. At least I don’t have to trade my health for work every time.

– Helen C, El Cerrito, CA

I am lucky to work for a company that gives me 10 sick days per year. Normally I did not use them until last year. My 2 year old son developed severe asthma. He had to go to the ER and was hospitalized for 3 days. Now we control his attacks better, but each time he does get an attack, we need to give him several treatments multiple times per day. He also needs to be closely observed since a lack of response to his treatments would require him to go back to the ER. You cannot expect a day care to do all that. So he needs to stay home with someone who can give him the best care while knowing him best and therefore being the closest observer: me!

– Nicole G, Anaheim, CA

I recently missed an entire week of work (actually 6 full days/48 hours), all of which was covered by paid sick leave. There was absolutely no way I could have gone to work on at least four of those six days without putting my health in a potentially life threatening situation and exposing my coworkers and customers to the pneumonia virus. Fortunately, because I have paid sick leave AND good health insurance, I got better, none of my coworkers got sick AND I did not suffer any economic hardship from missing an entire week’s salary.

My question for any legislator who balks at granting paid sick leave: Would you willingly and knowingly eat food that was prepared by someone with the flu or hepatitis? I’d doubt it but that sort of public health disaster in the making happens every day because those sick workers don’t have access to paid sick leave.

– Philip J, Scotts Valley, CA

I am a social worker and have worked at my government job for twenty two years. I have a extremely rare disease, Erdheim-Chester Disease. I travel from California to MD Anderson in Houston monthly and NIH in Bethesda, Maryland once a year to see my doctor and participate in research at both institutions. Paid sick days have allowed me to keep my job, stay off of disability (which most with my disease are on), pay taxes, and contribute to the betterment of society.

My wife works for the same county government and uses her sick days to accompany me because I wouldn’t be able to do it without her. Sick days are necessary to keep Americans working and prioritizing their families and taking care of their children who get sick. Additionally, FMLA allowed me to undergo chemotherapy and return to work where I’ve been the last 5 1/2 years.

– Larry H, So. Lake Tahoe, CA

I have relied on paid sick leave during two bouts of melanoma. I recovered and have gone on to live a productive life. Paid sick leave offered me financial security during several very difficult periods of time, and allowed me to take the time I needed to heal after surgery.

– Nina F, Piedmont, CA

I cannot afford rent and food, let alone taking unpaid time off work when I’m sick. I haven’t seen a dentist in 7 years, nor have I been able to see someone about my broken hand or broken toe, get shots, or immunize my son.

– Cameron S, San Pablo, CA

My dear friend Shirley died of pancreatic cancer. By the time she went to the doctor it was too late. She didn’t have paid sick days or good insurance. We can do better.

– Jessica E, Santa Cruz, CA

My husband lost his job because he has asthma. They said he was sick too often. It shouldn’t be like that.

– Darlene G, Val Verde, CA

This issue is very pertinent to me. My father is currently ill and worried sick about loosing his job over it. Thanks to
the poor economy and my college fund, he has no savings or even retirement funds to fall back on.

Making small changes like this are the catalyst towards an equal, sustainable, and ethical work force.

– Kellie C, Rocklin, CA

As a family physician working at a clinic that cares for hard-working low-income patients, I see the need for paid sick days close-up every day and really hope that you support it.

– Dr. G M, Orange, CA

I work for a major retailer and have NO sick days. If I become ill for more than a day or two, it becomes a REAL BURDEN FINANCIALLY; therefore, at times I go in when I shouldn’t, therefore possibly infecting others. I CAN’T AFFORD to stay home!

– Bob M, Santa Rosa, CA

As a primary care doctor taking time to be home right now to recover from an illness and not worrying about losing my pay, I think paid sick days are absolutely needed for good preventive medicine.

– Doertlis S, Berkeley, CA

Let’s keep our children and families healthy. A low-income mother I know lost her job when she had to take four days off due to her child’s emergency surgery. She was in a job with no sick time available. This is a travesty in the world’s wealthiest country.

We cannot decry how poorly our students do in comparison to competitor nations when we seem so unwilling to invest even in the basic well-being of our families, who raise these children, our students and future workers.

– Julie, San Jose, CA

Due to a chronic illness, I must take a prescription medicine that decreases my immune responses, which puts me at much greater than average risk of complications if I become sick with the flu, or other contagious diseases. If sick people cannot stay home from work, they spread disease to people like me.

– Suzanne K, Santa Cruz, CA

COLORADO

Every child deserves to have a parent, or loving grandparent with them at home when they are ill! LIKewise all Mothers should have paid PTO in order to attend to sick children, & or themselves!

– Janet K, Lakewood, CO

As a family physician, I daily see the negative consequences of our bizarrely backwards policies. As a worker and mom, I have experienced them. It’s time we did something about them.

– Robin D, Englewood, CO

This sure would have made my life easier when I was a working mom. I even had to leave my son alone with a teenage friend when he was sick.

– Laura A, Denver, CO

I have two daughters that had children in the last year and I was astonished as to how little support they received from the employers and the costs. They (husbands included) are in, all but one case, large corporate entities. Actually, the small employer was the most generous and understanding! They each want one more child, yet seriously wonder if they can afford it--this is a shame for the richest country in the world to treat it's hard working, educated citizens with such disregard. How are we going to move forward?

– Nancy M, Boulder, CO

This is all too true. I have a great employer who understands that I have 2 children, and need to occasionally take off for doctor appointments. But they add up too quickly and I do not get paid for days I take off. Then, I can’t take care of myself and go to the doctor because that would mean even more unpaid days that I cannot afford if I want to keep paying for the place we all live.

– Genevieve M, Brighton, CO

As a teacher, I have seen far too many children come to school sick because their parents don’t have paid sick leave and can’t afford to take a day off. This hurts both the children and the others who are exposed to illness.

– Carla B, Longmont, CO

I’m now retired, but was sick a lot during my working years. If I had not had paid sick days, I would never have survived. We all need paid sick days, it’s only fair.

– Alice G, Wheat Ridge, CO

I’m a nurse (LPN). My employer does not give me paid sick time. I have had to go to work while I have a cold.

– Kimberley B, Denver, CO

As a family physician, I regularly see the problems with not getting paid sick days. An illness or injury and send a family into a financial spiral. Often people are trying to work or send their children to school when it isn’t safe to do so. We all benefit from paid sick days!

– Robin D, Englewood, CO

I am fortunate to be a professional worker who receives paid sick leave whenever needed. Our lowest paid workers -- people who perform any number of essential tasks in this country—should have the same access to sick pay that higher paid workers take for granted.

– Linda F, Boulder, CO

I, along with millions of other veterans, need time off/paid sick days for many medical, family illnesses, or mental health issues just to name a few.

– Herb B, Centennial, CO

I am a computer programmer, and for some reason, most of the job offers I had when my children were home were contract positions, not full-time employment positions. Hence, I was a “contractor” for most of the last 10 years. Mind you, I have 20 years of experience doing database development, but companies were hiring contractors to do this programming, and not employees. As a contractor, I got no benefits of any kind. I didn’t get paid when I wasn’t at work. Employees of the companies where I worked got paid on Christmas, for example, but I didn’t get paid.

Obamacare was a godsend because I have one child who was born with a bladder issue that was surgically repaired when she was 4, but insurance companies would not cover her. And of course, when my kids were sick and either my
husband or I had to stay home with them, we didn’t get paid. (He was con-
tracting for many of those years, as well. Don’t get me started on the unfairness of contract work!)  
- Jennie E, Lafayette, CO

I drive a tractor-trailer and can’t tell you how often I have driven when too sick to safely operate such a vehicle. Paid sick days are not a convenience for me but a safety issue.  
- David G, Fort Collins, CO

I’m 74 and never had paid sick days and I’m still working.  
- Barbara B, Woodland Park, CO

CONNECTICUT

This is vital to the care of every employee. My sister is one of these people suffering through pain because of fear of losing her job and she is sick but too afraid to stay home and care for herself because of retribution.  
- Janice G, East Hartford, CT

I and many of my friends have gone to work hurt or sick because we HAVE NO CHOICE. It makes us feel less then human.  
- Lois S, Norwich, CT

I am pleased that my employer, a state agency, provides paid sick days. All employers should do the same. It generates commitment and loyalty from employees so it makes good business sense!  
- Monica van Beusekom, Storrs, CT

Having paid sick leave in Connecticut has made a positive difference in my family. It’s time to enable more workers to accrue this family benefit as well. It reflects an important need for the way most families must live today. It means employees will be treated like human beings instead of machines. It’s the right thing, & the fair thing, to do.  
- Bruce D, No. Branford, CT

A year and a half ago my husband passed away, leaving me with two children under the age of 4. Before his passing, we were your average American family both working full time, one of us in school to further education, and both our children in daycare. Since he is gone now, I am no longer a working parent and live off of state assistance because I can’t afford to take care of my children when they are sick and the cost of childcare is more than I can earn.  
- Hacah B, Plantsville, CT

DELAWARE

I direct a daycare. Doctors are reluctant to tell parents to keep their children home when they are ill because parents are desperate to get to work. That makes my center and the staff working in my center a sickbed. It’s not fair to everyone. Parents, and therefore centers like mine, need help.  
- Elizabeth K, Wilmington, DE

A survey of Connecticut employers found that the state’s paid sick days law has had a minimal effect on costs, and the vast majority of employers have not reported making changes, such as increasing prices or reducing employee hours, because of it. Employers identified several positive effects, including improved employee productivity and morale, and more than three-quarters expressed support for the law.


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Ultimately, workers are more productive when they are healthy and not distracted by illness and acute care giving problems in their families. Mandating paid sick days for workers is a common sense, minimal approach to enabling people to be as productive as they can be and to protecting co-workers and customers from spread of illness and infection.  
- Sharon R, Washington, DC

I am a community pediatrician with enough sick time to call out for about 6
months! I have the unfortunate circumstance of working in an environment where calling out sick is strongly discouraged, frowned upon, and sometimes results in such consequences as working longer hours, seeing more patients upon my return from work, or experiencing inflexibility in future scheduling requests. I have come to work with a migraine strong enough not to think straight, but because of pressure from hospital administration, I reported to work. When my little one was sick, I was told to contact the hospital’s list of ‘on-call’ babysitters so that she could be looked after in order for me to go to work; to let some stranger into my home to care for my sick child while I take care of others’ sick children! It makes no sense that someone’s fear of retribution for calling out should supersede the common sense decision to take off when you or your child is sick. Not only should paid sick days be mandatory, but there should be no consequences when we take them.

– Bernice R* (Pseudonym), Washington, DC

FLORIDA

I just began my “dream job” not three weeks ago and my son and I have both fallen dreadfully ill. I have and will go into work really sick, but as pertains to my kindergartener; I’m at a loss when he’s fallen ill. We need paid sick days. I can’t miss work and certainly cannot run the risk of losing our livelihood to Rotavirus! Help us to better help ourselves!

– Jillian S, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

And I, as a consumer, should not be faced with an illness because I needed to shop, or go to the doctor’s. Staying home when you are sick keeps us all much healthier.

– Sharon R Mary, Esther, FL

A nurse’s aide I know was pressured into finishing her shift while she was having a heart attack. She was having standard symptoms soon after her shift started and her nurse supervisor knew exactly what she was doing to her. My other friend was required to serve food at a fancy restaurant while sick with strep throat. All the servers had it & were told to come in or be fired.

– Jean A, Orlando, FL

If it were not for the paid sick days that I earned while working, I would have not been able to take care for my husband through multiple surgeries and other health related issues.

– Vernealies T, Orange Park, FL

I have been suffering greatly because I have no access to paid sick days. It forces me to work while sick, putting others at risk.

– Jack F, Winter Park, FL

For many years as a teacher, I got sick from being among students who needed to be home in bed. The 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 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 some sick leave.

– Rory R, Leesburg, FL

Everyone occasionally gets sick and is unable to go to work, but one’s paycheck and quality of life shouldn’t be negatively impacted – no one’s always healthy. Having a reasonable number of paid sick days would go a long way toward assuring the health and economic security of working families.

– Jeffrey R, Fort Myers, FL

I have a pregnant granddaughter and her partner living with me. They both work for Dunkin Doughnuts. He is about to lose his job and she works almost 40 hours a week with no benefits. They can’t count on anything when this baby comes. That is why I took them in. Low salary, no benefits and no real high paying jobs in this area. We need to protect our children and grandchildren with workplace rights like paid sick days.

– Carol P, Royal Palm Beach, FL

I highly support this! I have lost jobs for having a child hospitalized. I have lost jobs due to illness. This needs to stop. We are way behind on this concept.

– Jessica R, Orlando, FL

I have no paid sick days for when I am sick, when my children are sick -- or when my mother was terminally ill. And I work for the state! I have insurance benefits, but no time off to use them!

– Randi S, Royal Palm Beach, FL

It is amazing to see how quickly a loss of a day’s pay can fall to homelessness. When life is always hanging by a thread, the fall is quick and deep.

– Mary B, Winter Park, FL

A 2013 review by the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor found no evidence that the District of Columbia’s Accrued Sick and Safe Leave Act of 2008 prompted businesses to leave the city or discouraged employers from establishing new businesses in it.

Please support paid sick days and keep all of us healthier. When people don’t have the option of staying home when they are sick, it jeopardizes all of us.

I can’t tell you how many times people have come to my office sick because they don’t have any options and before you know it, the entire office is sick. Give us all the option of staying healthy.

- Elsie S, Cape Coral, FL

Today I got fired. Why? Because I used paid sick time when I got pneumonia, but when I turned in my timesheet, my boss refused to pay me. This is why we need national paid sick days legislation!

- Olga, Boca Raton, FL

For many years, I neglected my medical needs because my job didn’t provide even one sick day per year. Today, I am in the same position. I hate it but, without the action of lawmakers, what can I do? Help me and millions like me!

- Corbett K, Orlando, FL

I have worked jobs with sick leave and those without. The ones without, if I got sick, I was expected to work anyway and thus spread my illness over everyone. I dealt with the public in this job, and thus spread the illness to the public as well. If I stayed home, I got yelled at by the boss and was made to feel I was shirking my duties. No one should have to feel that way. We all get sick.

- Debbie W, Middleburg, FL

I am a mother who raised her child by herself, working 1-5 part time jobs to take care of us. All of it was unpaid if I couldn’t show up due to illness. Now my numerous health problems can be tied to the stress and worry that I endured.

- Bethany Z, Saint Johns, FL

As a single parent who raised my son by myself, I know how important this issue is. EVERY worker in the United States deserves to have paid sick leave. It’s way past time to solve this problem.

- James J, Southport, FL

As a working mother of 3 little ones, I highly value working for an organization that appreciates family values. In turn, when I am working, I am highly dedicated because the appreciation is mutual. Yes, reasonable sick days, or even flexible comp. time is a great encouragement for working families.

I believe well cared for children who can receive the dedication of a loving working parent when most needed (i.e. when sick) can become great members of the legacy and future of a nation.

- Jennifer F, Micanopy, FL

When I was a working mom, I was lucky enough to find employment where I was provided paid sick days. While using “sick days” did not make you a popular employee, it did enable me to take time off when my children needed medical attention, and it did not lower my pay check.

- Anita D, Port Richey, FL

During the time that my children were growing up, I used paid sick leave to care for my ill children. It was a blessing to have. Don’t know what I would have done. Then as my parents became older, appointments and care for them became part of my responsibility and I was able to make most of those appointments because of paid sick leave. Parents and guardians need to be able to use their paid sick leave to care for their children and elderly parents. I am a living witness that it works.

- Lorraine O, Altamonte Springs, FL

I used to work for a tiny non-profit. I had to fight for any leave as the board chairman didn’t think anyone should take time off. He even told people he didn’t like hiring people with families because then he can’t make them work as much. Now I work for a state agency and get ample leave.

I am more productive at work when I don’t have to come in sick or worry about having to take leave. I wish everyone had the security I have now, knowing I can take care of myself and my family when I need to.

- Quilla M, Tallahassee, FL

When my parents were in need of my help, I had to take a “leave of absence” without pay, to go help. I am an only child. My two daughters had jobs and only one of them was able to come up and help one time. It was a very difficult time financially for me.

- Constance S, Largo, FL

I asked to schedule a doctor’s appointment and was denied. I ended up having to have two shoulder surgeries, six months of physical therapy, and lost my job.

- Katonya W, Pensacola, FL

My mom is 92 and I can’t have home healthcare workers showing up sick to take care of her because they don’t have any sick days.

- Karen L, Tampa, 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 schoolroom 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 leave, 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.

- Esther J, Clewiston, FL

GEORGIA

I was fired from my job of nearly 5 years because of not having any paid sick days.

- Stacie S, Winder, GA

As a full-time employed working mother, who happens to have a terrible cold today, but is lucky enough to have an employer who provides paid sick time, I definitely support the need for all employees to have such a benefit. Going to work sick threatens the health of many others!

- Kathleen A, Norcross, GA

I have a friend who got fired because her daughter was in the hospital. She had herself and two children to support. This was just WRONG!

- Donna H, Gainesville, GA

Please, as an Infectious Disease specialist and a mom, I ask that you let people
who are sick or have sick kids stay home! Otherwise, the infections spread quickly, compromise public health, and productivity is lost! Please support paid sick days! It helps all of us stay healthy and productive!

– Alison K, Decatur, GA

In low income jobs you not only don’t earn sick time but can be fired for absences. I worked in call centers and if you were absent 3 days in a 90 day period you were then put on probation that lasts a year and even calling out one more day you could be fired. I witnessed a single Mom whose work was exemplary get fired when her five year old was sick once again and she had nowhere to turn. I myself was also on probation when my daughter got sick with pneumonia twice in a short period. I was fortunate enough to have someone else care for her when she was sick for the next year and then I was finally off probation. Many different workers need this desperately and in my experience it is crucial for call center workers.

– Carla L, Sudbury, GA

I was sick in November and December. The four days off that I missed and the two my husband missed, will take our family over two months to recover from. We do not get sick days where we work currently.

– Carrie H, Duluth, GA

It is an impossible choice! I was a “stay at home mom” when my kids were little, so I did not have to make that choice. My daughter has to make it, though. She takes all of her own sick days and uses them to take care of her children when they are sick. That means that she must go to work sick and also expose her clients to the illness. The other option is to give her sick child Tylenol and hope he/she can make it through the day. I would love to have paid sick days. I go to work sick sometimes and get other people sick and I see over 25 people a week!

– Connie B, Athens, GA

Just last year in December, I missed four days of work (unpaid) and I am still working overtime and on my days off to make up for it. In those four days I lost $800 worth of pay. I am a massage therapist, so working without a day off really hurts. I would love to have paid sick days. I go to work sick sometimes and get other people sick and I see over 25 people a week!

– Carrie H, Duluth, GA

I was fortunate to have had paid sick days during my career in public health (now retired). My daughter-in-law is a mother of four and works for a dental practice that does not provide sick leave.

– Connie B, Athens, GA

NEARLY 4 IN 10 BLACK WORKERS ARE NOT ABLE TO EARN PAID SICK DAYS


Forcing people to go into work sick and spread their germs to others just isn’t good for business.

– William W, Athens, GA

I was fortunate to have had paid sick days during my career in public health (now retired). My daughter-in-law is a mother of four and works for a dental practice that does not provide sick leave.

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Just last year in December, I missed four days of work (unpaid) and I am still working overtime and on my days off to make up for it. In those four days I lost $800 worth of pay. I am a massage therapist, so working without a day off really hurts. I would love to have paid sick days. I go to work sick sometimes and get other people sick and I see over 25 people a week!

– Carrie H, Duluth, GA

Please do this. Our granddaughter was born w/ health problems requiring 3 major surgeries before 8 months old. Her dad's employer has paid sick leave. Not all do.

– Elizabeth M, Columbus, GA

Several years ago, I was working as a secretary/assistant for a Financial Consultant/Life Insurance Broker. It was agreed that I would be a salaried, not hourly employee and I would have medical insurance provided in 90 days.

A few (between two and three) months after I began the job, I developed a DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis), a large blood clot, in my left femoral vein.

I was rushed by ambulance to a medical center and admitted to the Cardiac Care floor at night. I called my boss in the morning to let him know my situation. Each day for the week I was in the hospital, I had to call him. I was permitted to return to work two weeks after the incident. My boss had changed my employment status to hourly to avoid paying me for the time missed. I never got the insurance.

– Gloria C, Macon, GA

When my nephew was only four weeks old, I watched as his parents’ car got repossessed. The tow truck hauled it off containing the only car seat his family owned plus his family’s personal items. His mother was staying home with him in order to breastfeed and recover from childbirth, things she knew to be healthy for their future. However, her full time office job did not pay for maternity leave nor for sick days. Neither did

– Ellen H, Sandy Spring, GA

– Carla L, Sudbury, GA

– Carrie H, Duluth, GA

– Connie B, Athens, GA

– Carrie H, Duluth, GA

– Elizabeth M, Columbus, GA

– Gloria C, Macon, GA

– Ellen H, Sandy Spring, GA

– William W, Athens, GA

– Alison K, Decatur, GA
I have an auto immune disorder which mandates that I see several physicians. However, since I am a federal contractor, I do not have the sick days I need.

– AE H, Atlanta, GA

I don’t know what my family or I would do if I did not have paid sick days. It is imperative that all employees have this right. It is not just for the sick employee, but for the entire workplace. If an employee comes into work sick, it puts others at risk. How does that make the workplace more productive? It does not!

– Truvia B, Dallas, GA

I am a small business owner but I feel strongly that giving employees paid sick days is the right thing to do from both a moral and an economic perspective. Especially given that I am a mother of two young children myself, I recognize the importance of paid sick days.

Children should not have to go to school sick and parents should not be forced to make a choice between sending a sick child to school and being able to pay their rent. Forcing your employees to make such choices leaves you with unhappy employees who will not be committed to the success of the company, and will not hesitate to move on if they have another job opportunity.

And, even if you do not care about the moral aspect of all of this, replacing a good employee is certainly more expensive than giving them a paid sick day!

– Audrey, Atlanta, GA

I was working for my previous employer for 7 1/2 months and lost my job because I took too many days off when I was sick still after getting over the laryngitis.

– Jennifer P, Austell, GA

I’m a senior who has to work because I work for $2.13/hr + tips. I don’t get sick leave. If I don’t work, I don’t make any money.

I’ve had to work with the flu, pneumonia & bronchitis because of the policies of my company. My co-workers all do the same. Some have kids so they also can’t afford to take time off for them.

– Barbara D, Newnan, GA

I am an elementary school teacher. Parents routinely send their children to school with fevers, diarrhea, vomiting, and rashes.

Although there are rules against sending your child to school with communicable diseases, parents are forced to choose between being paid, being disciplined at work, or staying home with a sick child. This is a dangerous situation, as it spreads disease. Paid sick leave needs to be law for all!

– Amy B, Ball Ground, GA

When I had a sick staff member, I INSISTED he/she go home - bad enough to have one less staff, I couldn’t function with TEN less because of germs spreading!

– Thomas T, Kailua, HI

I have paid sick days, and so I can try to avoid spreading any virus I come down with. I actually got pneumonia a year ago, and had to miss about 2 weeks of work.

Thank goodness for paid sick leave or I would have lost an entire paycheck. However, my fiancee doesn’t have paid sick days, and so he either must go to work sick and possibly spread his illness, or we lose much needed income. Everyone deserves some paid sick leave. Mahalo!

– Rachel G, Honolulu, HI

Statistically, Idaho has an inordinate number of minimum wage and blue collar positions. Given this fact, it is imperative to address the issue that plagues individuals and families when someone is ill but the bills have yet to be paid. Paid leave is the right thing to do. It will produce financial savings for those affected by this issue, and it will cost less to society in the form of financial and social assistance programs for those who fall behind due to his/her own illness or family illnesses.

– Robbie L, Boise, ID

When my husband was suffering a multitude of illnesses, we hesitated to take him shopping because sick clerks were common. Protect the workers, protect all.

– Margaret D, Idaho Falls, ID

My husband and I both worked while raising our 5 children. Our oldest daughter has muscular dystrophy. She would get upper respiratory illnesses a lot. We also had many IEP meetings with the school to help her through her middle school and high school years. We also had three smaller children who were late to school and high school years. We also had three smaller children who were stairsteped, so when one got sick, the other 2 inevitably got sick also.

We did not have family support because the grandparents all worked. I cannot imagine what it would have been like to not have had paid sick days. I suppose the worst would have been that I was fired from my job and had to live on welfare because I wouldn’t be able to care for my children without a job.

– Kim H, Payette, ID

I am one of the workers who cannot earn any sick days, which means I loose wages when either I or my son is sick. Those wages are so low that it is very difficult for me to lose even one day’s pay from my paycheck. Please pass paid sick days.

– Julie E, Rockford, IL

Being one of the millions without paid sick day coverage, I know how miserable it is. We can take vacation days if we
are sick, so we can get pay, but it adds points against our attendance tally. Accruing a certain number of points for being ill or not reporting or reporting even one minute late for bad weather, car trouble, anything can lead to dismissal. At the very least, it is an added worry on top of being ill. Day shift workers also have to use vacation time for doctor’s appointments, etc, as they are seldom open odd hours.

- Helen M, Morristown, IL

I have not been to a doctor in two years, almost three. I work six days a week. If I don’t work, I don’t get paid. I work with infants and the elderly. I hope I’ve never infected anyone, but if it’s a choice between my children not eating and someone else’s health, I have to make the selfish choice.

- Gwyn A, Chicago, IL

I was diagnosed with breast cancer last year and have missed many days due to doctor’s visits, surgery, and recovery. Because my employer is a small business, I have no paid sick days. The financial burden of this illness does not support recovery, and allowing me to earn paid sick days would have been very helpful.

- Anne N, Berwyn, IL

Not having paid sick days is especially hard on single-parent families. I remember all too well. Going into work sick, or sending a sick child to school only increases the chances of others getting sick, as well. Supporting paid sick days isn’t just common sense - it’s good for businesses, too!

- Susan D, Chicago, IL

From my experience, the people least likely to have paid sick leave are also the most likely to have financial problems from missing even one day’s pay.

- Erika T, Staunton, IL

I work in a factory where people come into work even when they are sick because they can’t afford to stay home. Our policy gives you 3 days to call in, then you have to get a doctors note after 4 days. NO PAY! You can’t get well that way!

- Donna E, Toledo, IL

I recently went through a food service drive-through & when I got to the pay window, a watery-eyed, red-nosed, clearly uncomfortable clerk was at the window. I don’t blame her for spreading germs -- I blame the HORRIBLE work situation. From below-poverty wages to no paid sick days ... this has to stop.

As an RN, I’m especially concerned about the health aspects of this issue -- the individual’s health & the public health.

- Barbara M, Schaumburg, IL

As a head start teacher, I see the impact on families first hand. Children are sent to school sick in the hope that they won’t get worse. Parents go to work sick. These hard working families deserve better.

- Marianne F, Des Plaines, IL

One of my nieces, a divorced mother of two boys, works a full time job and must also care for her family. She needs paid sick days!

- Margaret N, Evanston, IL

My husband is 75 and still working. No paid sick days. He just received 2 weeks of vacation this year and of course will have to use that as sick days. It is not only people with families and small children that need paid sick days. Us older folks do too.

- Katherine W, Chicago, IL

I was a single mom for most of my daughter’s life. Many times I chose to send her to school sick because I could not afford to take more days off. Of course, that is how disease spreads, but sometimes we just don’t have a choice.

- Carole P, Lake Villa, IL

When I worked as a contractor, I was paid hourly. So if one of my kids was sick, I would lose an entire day’s pay staying home with them. I did contract work for years after being laid off from a full-time job in 2009, right after my first child was born.

Not having paid sick days is one of the
main reasons our family came out of the recession in a poor financial position with lots of debt.

Without that income loss, we could have had savings instead of debt. We could be making purchases right now, boosting the economy, instead of using that money to pay off debts. Paid sick days would make a huge difference for working families and for the entire U.S. economy.

– Jen M, Lincolnwood, IL

Many years ago, shortly after starting with the USPS, I was mugged and hospitalized with a head injury. I was off work over a month. Had it not been for the sick leave I earned with the Postal Service, I most likely would have been out of my apartment and living with my parents.

– Mark H, Oak Lawn, IL

I work for an agency as a caregiver and I receive no sick or vacation days. I’ve lost pay due to this, but I can’t show up to work if I may be contagious.

– Leslie D, Rolling Meadows, IL

I am a trained and licensed health care professional. I do not, however, get a day pay, vacation days, or any potential sick to work more in the last two years than all my previous working life combined!

Please, help us keep up with the rest of the industrialized world and make PTO mandatory for all workers, regardless of the job they have!!!

– Bridget R, Carbondale, IL

My husband had multiple surgeries following an automobile accident, and then developed a life-threatening infection. When I had to use my sick and vacation time to participate in my husband’s medical care, I was sure to let my employer know exactly when I would be out of the office and do my best to make up my work.

My employer then informed me that my excessive time off would be written as a warning and added to my personnel file. His medical treatment nearly derailed all our plans to make our future better for ourselves and our children. To have my employer add to an already stressful situation was unnecessary and cruel.

– Rachael J, DeKalb, IL

I work full-time and have four young children. This means I see doctors a lot, even when the kids are healthy - the pediatrician for well-baby visits, the dentist, the eye doctor. And then there are the times when they get sick. Pink eye seems to be an ever-constant in the winter.

Sick days help keep my kids healthy. And they help keep me healthy. I can regularly see my eye doctor, dentist and OB/GYN. And when I get sick, I’m able to rest and recover quickly, increasing my productivity at work.

– Emily W, River Forest, IL

I had just found out that I was a few months pregnant and had told my boss. I ended up taking two days off because I was horribly sick due to the pregnancy. The next day, I came back to work and my boss told me that I wasn’t doing my job and they had to let me go. I know that was a lie because two weeks before that, I was given a raise because I was doing such a great job.

– Natalie L, Girard, IL

I lost my job due to having acute bronchitis and being sick for too many days.

– Elizabeth H, Lake Bluff, IL

I am a small business owner and I support paid sick days.

– Nan W, Chicago, IL

INDIANA

There is no reason the United States can’t join the rest of the civilized world in this. I have had to work while extremely ill because I couldn’t afford to miss work.

Plus, I could have been punished for absenteeism. However, because I came to work sick and infected others, I was disciplined, as well.

– Julie P, Evansville, IN

For the last 25 years my family has been intermittently without sick day pay, holiday pay, vacation days, or any potential paid time off for family. We need this more than ever!

– Teresa K, Lawrenceburg, IN

Having to drag to work when sick and contagious is unhealthy for everyone, runs the risk of both lower productivity and more time out sick by other employees.

– Alice A, South Bend, IN

When my son had chickenpox, mumps, and measles to name a few, including the flu, I had to take vacation days from the factory I worked at. That was their way of giving us sick days for our children as well as ourselves. It was tough to have enough vacation days to cover it. I had no vacation time left to take and enjoy and that made for a very dull and tedious life. I am praying you will take the time to read other people’s thoughts and change things for the betterment of families.

– Trudy G, Seymour, IN

I taught dance to children. There were no paid sick days or vacation days. No work, no pay. While I don’t have children of my own, I still needed to work when I was sick.

Translation, I probably made others sick. When I was growing up, my mom had paid sick days. She was astonished that I didn’t have the same some 20-30 years later!!!

– Leigh S, Centerpoint, IN

I work in a small, independent bakery. Today, one of the workers came in with the flu; work or no pay! Can you imagine! She had no real choice! Shame on us for our short-sightedness & unwillingness to accept reality. People need a reasonable number of sick days! The public deserves policies that protect public health!

– Cathy K, South Bend, IN

I am a professor who researches work/life issues, and I can tell you that the U.S. lags behind every industrialized nation in the world in terms of its federal protections for families. Paid sick days are vital for working families.

– Barbara E, Terre Haute, IN
My son works in the restaurant business. He’s a great chef, but he doesn’t get paid a lot. He doesn’t get sick days so like all of his colleagues, unless he is really ill, he works even if he’s sick. That isn’t good for him, and it’s not good for the rest of us either!
– Kelsey K, Greencastle, IN

My child was sick and not allowed to go to pre-school because of the sickness. My husband was sick too and could not take care of our son, Johnny. I had to stay home to care for them both and lost pay and got a lecture from my supervisor. I was a social worker for the State of Indiana at the time. I have since moved on in my career/work status.
– Margaret B, Michigan City, IN

I support paid sick days as a physician and a parent. Our country cannot afford to lose our children nor our workforces. Acknowledgement and support of sick workers and their families only serves to enable loyal employees.
– Michele C, Clive, IA

When I taught/was employed in public schools (before retirement), I was ever grateful that on days when I was ill I could keep my germs at home, have a paid substitute fill in for me, and didn’t lose my regular pay. There were always adequate sick days allowed in my contract, and they could carry over from year to year in case of a prolonged illness or hospitalization.

When my mother was in her last years and living in the same town, I was very grateful that I had sufficient family leave time to attend to her needs. I would wish that every employee could be so humanely provided for.
– Barbara D, Decorah, IA

I work for a large hospital and we are experiencing a flu epidemic in our city and in the broader region the hospital serves. All but a few survive, but what if it were H1N1 or SARS or worse? You can help prevent these kinds of epidemics!
– Barbara Zilles, Iowa City, IA

KANSAS

Paid sick days would vastly reduce time lost by other employees due to spread of illness. And that’s just one benefit to employers.
– Ravena O, Lawrence, KS

My son is about to become a single father and has worked at McDonald’s for 4 years with 2 years as an overnight manager. He currently has no sick leave, so he either goes to work in the food industry feeling lousy or goes without necessary hours on his paycheck and gets behind on bills. This legislation is important and so helpful!
– Kathleen L, Salina, KS

My daughter who is a single Mom got FIRED for missing 2 days of work when she had the FLU! Businesses in right-to-work states like Kansas are using it against workers. Going to work with the flu is irresponsible but some people have no choice...go to work sick or lose your job...please give them a different choice!!
– Julie G, Olathe, KS

My whole working career, I had paid sick days. My brother did not. The differences for us, and for our families (and the colleagues and “innocent bystanders”) proved critical. For the sake of families - or for the sake of our shared economy, if that’s all you find important and need to be recognized.
– Phyllis R, New Orleans, LA

LOUISIANA

Paid sick days for all are important for public health. Frequently, the CDC is urging those who are sick to stay home, however, those without paid sick leave often go to work sick rather than lose pay. This spreads sicknesses, lowers workplace productivity, and adds to our health care costs. The health and public health benefits of paid sick days are important and need to be recognized.
– Eve O, New Orleans, LA

I am about to turn 40 in a few months and have been working for the same company for 12 years now. I have never had paid sick day in any job that I have worked at. I am dealing with arthritis pain, and have to work no matter how bad I feel, because I simply can’t afford to take even one day off.
– Kellie Bar, Erlanger, KY

Kentucky

My daughter earns $9/hr, no benefits, at a nearly-fulltime job. She’s allowed only one [unpaid] day off for sickness, even though she provides customer service in a bakery, where she can easily transmit illnesses to co-workers or the public.

To take more than one [unpaid] day off and keep her job, she must produce a doctor’s excuse, but the doctor’s visit costs a minimum of $80 [uninsured]-- that’s 1.5 days’ pay!--to obtain. Do you want her coughing around YOUR food?
– Melissa L, Lexington, KY

My family is privileged now to have an income that includes sick days, but through many difficult times of my life, I have been without when I desperately needed it. No one should have to go without paid sick days.
– PL M, Louisburg, KS

And that’s just one benefit to employers.
– Kellie Bar, Erlanger, KY

Staying home with a sick child can mean losing your job, and finding another one is not easy. Paid sick leave
is essential to a healthy society, is humane, and profits business as it inspires loyalty and common sense in workers who feel cared for and safer in their jobs!

– Deni A, Metairie, LA

At 26, I went through chemotherapy and a radical mastectomy to survive breast cancer. At the time, my husband and I lived in Michigan, which was a very blue state back then. He was able to take time off from work to care for, not only me, but our 2 children as well, all while continuously receiving a paycheck. That was 15 years ago.

We now have our 3rd child, our chemo gift as we call him, and we now live in a very red state, so to say. Up until just last month, we had been cancer free. Even though we’re still in the beginning stages of what to do and how to do it, we know one thing for sure.

This state, is a right to work state, and my husband will not be able to take time off to care for me and our son. Oh and I know you’re thinking, “go back to Michigan.” Wrong, they too are now a right to work state. We should all be able to care for our own, and not go bankrupt doing it.

– Christian F, Zachary, LA

I work at a daycare center; kids come when they are sick because parents have no other option. This is a public health issue for families with young children.

– Mary T, Pella, LA

MAIN

As a working mom w/3 kids for 40 years AND a former director of a child care program serving 2-12 year olds, 12 months a year, I’m here to tell you that this issue is huge – for families, our economy and our nation. It’s a national disgrace – to be blunt! It needs your support. Thanks!

– Suzanne M, Durham, ME

Paid sick leave is really important to working families like mine! If my husband doesn’t work, he doesn’t get paid. That is bad for his health, and mine, since any sick days for kids fall on me. I get paid sick days, but have to make up work.

– Zoe M, Portland, ME

If my children get sick I have to bring them to day care anyways. I cannot miss work without the threat of losing my job. I need to work to pay my bills. I already collect food stamps and have state paid health care.

– Victoria, Portland, ME

As as an RN and childcare business owner and operator, my employees and I care for the children of many nurses, doctors and other health professionals. All of us are supportive of paid sick days and of raising the minimum wage. I currently have no paid sick day policy, except for not charging my clients when they don’t bring their kids to me, but I do pay my employees a minimum of $13/hour and average of $15.50/hour. If there was a federal paid sick day policy, I would be happy to have paid sick days too. When I used to work as a hospital nurse we were all forced to work while sick. One day, while starting an IV, my runny nose, from a fresh cold, unexpectedly dripped onto the patient’s arm! I was mortified. I had to disinfect the arm and start over. My groceries were just bagged by a 55 year old woman who was

forced to work while sick with the Norro virus! My sister works at Target and said a whole bunch of employees have been working while throwing up, lately. The ER’s in my area have been filled with an epidemic of people throwing up. With paid sick days, employers would have a tough time forcing people to work while sick and making you sick too!

– Melanie C, Falmouth, ME

All research shows sick days benefit employers because it lessens out days for workers who get better faster and does not harm productivity.

– Julie G, Old Town, ME

MARYLAND

In my current job, I don’t get any sick days. I have a masters degree and work at a non-profit that helps individuals with autism. I shouldn’t have to choose between doing work that I enjoy (and is vital to our society with 1 in 88 children having autism) and being able to stay healthy and a minimal sense of security.

I am the only one of my five siblings that still has my appendix and I live with a CONSTANT fear that some day mine will go bad too. I cannot afford to lose my job if I get sick. I’m paying off student loans and just making it on my social service salary.

I often think to myself, “I went to an Ivy League University. I got my masters degree in social work so I could do more good in the world. I work two jobs and pay my bills. I live in the most powerful country in the world. I’ve worked and studied hard and lived simply all my life. Why can’t I have a little security?” A little peace of mind, that’s all I want. Please support paid sick days.

– Sarah P, Berwyn Heights, MD

I’m a Mom and a Maternal-Infant Clinical Nurse Specialist of over 30 years. Supporting families economically and implementing family friendly laws builds community and strengthens the very fibers that makes our country so amazing.

– Lisa O, Silver Spring, MD

I’m actually home sick right now, and I don’t have paid sick leave. Fortunately
I’m not the sole breadwinner. I work in a school, and I see many children who are sent home with a fever, who are returned to school the next day, because their parents can’t afford to miss another day of work, even though everyone knows you should be “fever free for 24 hrs” before returning to school or work.

- Mary B, Laurel, MD

As a working mother, I cannot stress enough how important it is for parents to have paid sick leave and maternity/paternity leave. Most parents can barely afford childcare on the wages of the average American. Having to choose between losing a day of pay or staying home to care for your sick child (or even when you, yourself, are sick) is a choice no parent – no AMERICAN – should have to make. It’s unfair and un-American! Please support paid sick leave and family leave for all Americans!

- Lylian R, Baltimore, MD

My late husband, a type I diabetic, was dying from heart failure. While in the hospital, he was offered the chance to cure his diabetes and heart disease by becoming the world’s first heart-pancreas transplant recipient. He agreed, had the surgeries, but caught a virus from the donor and died of liver failure two months later. He was in intensive care for those two months.

I was a teacher (since retired) at the time in Montgomery County, MD, and I had sick leave and belonged to the teachers union sick leave bank. Members donate one sick day each year to the bank to cover those members who go over their allotment. I certainly went over that year, but lost no pay.

Sadly, I did lose my husband, but not being paid would have been an additional financial burden I was spared because of paid sick leave. What are people supposed to do when they can’t be at work because of illness?

- Kay K, Hanover, MD

In 2014, my otherwise healthy pregnancy ended abruptly when my water broke 4 months premature. He spent 91 days in the NICU fighting for his life. Because of access to paid sick leave and flexibility on the part of my employer, I was able to be by his side without jeopardizing my job (and his health insurance) or our ability to pay our mortgage and mounting medical bills.

Having access to paid sick and family leave allowed us to focus on the needs of our baby and without a doubt had a positive effect on his health. He is now a thriving three-year-old and I will forever be grateful that I was not forced to choose between my job and caring for my child.

- Sarah G B, Berwyn Heights, MD

I currently work full-time as a server in a small, family restaurant. I have MS and sadly, if I don’t work I don’t get paid. Missing even one day can cripple an entire month’s (already stretched) finances.

On a few occasions, I’ve actually been taken to the emergency room, directly from work (once by the owner) because the pain was so intense. This then leads to additional days of work being missed to recover. If I had the ability to use a sick day, with pay, at the initial onset, it would not only allow me to not be crippled for that days pay, but rest and allow my body to recoup and potentially not miss additional days.

- Gina K, Baltimore, MD

Both my wife and I are taking care of our aging parents. We have been doing so for the entire span of our relationships (8 years and counting). We have a saying around our house... it’s not a holiday unless someone is critically ill.

Over the past 8 years, we have dealt with 2 strokes, a broken wrist, a broken elbow, anaphylaxis, a kidney stent, a heart stent, pneumonia, multiple trips to the emergency room, multiple stays at rehabilitation facilities, and last, but not least, multiple trips to primary care physicians, nephrologists, endocrinologists, cardiologists, neurologists and dentists. As you might imagine, all of this takes up a great deal of time. Without paid sick time and the ability to use it to care for our moms, we would be lost. I have never had to make the terrible decision of taking my mom to the doctors or emergency room for care - or go to work because I couldn’t miss the pay.

My wife and I have the great fortune to have well paying supportive jobs with generous benefits. Not all are so fortunate and have to make those terrible choices every time a parent, partner or child gets ill. I know many women who refuse to take any time off to take care of themselves because they are “saving” their time up to use on a loved one. They simply can’t afford not to get paid.

Paid sick days ultimately make for a better work force. Paid sick days also benefit the workplace. Colds, flu and other viral illness spread like wildfire through businesses when people are unable to stay home and heal. This ultimately makes for less productivity and less profit for the business. Both stakeholders deserve more.

- Pamela M, Catonsville, MD

As a Registered Nurse, I am horrified that sick people can harvest my salad greens, prepare my food, contaminate my clean dishes in restaurants and spread disease.

As of the moment, there is no clear vector for Chipotle’s disease outbreaks. But we do know that most people in the food industry do not have paid sick days. So they come to work sick.

- Kathleen K, Annapolis, MD

I just last week was hit hard with the flu. I was able to stay home from work, without worrying about losing money from my paycheck to recover. Because I had one full day to recover at the onslaught of my illness I was able to bounce back and take care of my two small children and get right back to work.

- Jennifer, Podkul, MD

We are a two-parent family, a Brady Bunch. Four out of our nine children still live at home. We struggle as it is, monthly, to pay our bills. Having to miss work for a sick child or myself adds great strain financially. Please, for all the families out there like mine, make paid sick days happen!

- Angela H, Easton, MD
As a woman who recently underwent treatments for advanced stage cancer, I know only too well the burden that unpaid sick days can place on a family.

- Mary C, Arnold, MD

As a former educator, I saw all too often when parents sent sick children to school because they were unable to stay home and care for them. This put a burden on the classroom teacher, fellow students and school health services.

More so, the sick child was forced to struggle through the day, unable to learn and unable to spend the needed time in bed at home to get well, thus creating an endless cycle of illness that affected many more students and adults. This is not a fair or humane way to treat children.

- Susan S, Bethesda, MD

As a registered nurse, it is important for me to be able to stay home from work when I'm sick in order to protect my patients. At this point in time we are penalized for doing so. This shouldn't be the case.

- Jaime M, Severn, MD

As a small business owner, I wholeheartedly support paid sick leave for all. As a child care director, I have had to write letters to the employers of my parents who had a sick child that could not be kept in care, to implore the employer to understand that ill children need to remain at home with a parent who must care for the child.

Many a day I have discovered that a parent gave a child a dose of Motrin or Tylenol to mask a fever or other symptoms so that they could get into work, knowing that when the medication wore off and the symptoms returned, they would get a call to pick up the child, after all the children and staff were exposed to the contagious sick child.

Communities will be healthier if everyone has the security of paid sick days. Please help to make this happen!

- Flora G, Bowie, MD

Today I am sick and would have loved to take a sick day, but it’s not an option.

- Sky T, Baltimore, MD

I am a retired senior with arthritis, which is an autoimmune disease. I don’t need sick days and have Medicare. I do need the people working at stores and restaurants to be able to stay home when they are sick instead of working because they have no sick days. Their illness could be life threatening to me.

- Constance M, Darlington, MD

My husband has a physical labor job, often out in the weather. When he is sick he has to choose between getting paid or taking care of his health and safety.

- Janet B, Gaithersburg, MD

I was a victim of no sick days as a government contractor. My contract was terminated while on recovery from a major surgery though I kept communication 100%.

All humans get sick and deserve to get paid so their recovery can be effective. It will save a lot of money too because sick employees can afford to stay home and not transmit/transfer their illness to others. This is imperative.

- Nora O, Kensington, MD

My mother had to have emergency surgery last spring. Luckily, my brother and I were both in grad school, so we could take time off when my father needed to be at work.

I don’t know what we would have done if my father didn’t have paid sick leave to take care of my mother after we had to go back to school. Either my brother or myself would have likely had to quit our degree programs.

- Celeste B, Derwood, MD

I had a young child with asthma and when he had attacks and couldn’t breathe, he needed a parent to take him to ER etc. Luckily both my husband and I had paid sick leave otherwise one of us would have to leave their job, which would have impacted our family in other ways. Paid sick leave is not a luxury but a necessity for working families.

- Patricia Y, Silver Spring, MD

I am an occupational therapist working in the health care system. I used to work part time and now work PRN, without any paid sick days, but I am/was able to flex my schedule around being sick or caring for sick children. My co-workers (medtechs and nursing assistants) were not so lucky. They are low wage earners and felt forced to come to work sick because they could not afford to miss one day of pay...thus infecting the rest of the assisted living population and staff--horrible repercussions. Please support PAID sick days for all.

- Laurel B, Westminster, MD

I once had to bring my sick child to work, and have her sleep on chairs in the report room because she couldn’t go to daycare, and my back up provider was out of town. I cried all the way home at the end of my shift, and vowed I would never do that to my child again, even if I was at risk of getting fired, and struggling financially.

- Donna S, Severn, MD

Because I don’t have sick days, I have gone to work when I was sick, and sent my kids to school when they were sick, just so that I wouldn’t earn less. I can’t afford to take time off. As a result, I feel guilty about not letting my kids have time off from school when they were under the weather, and I feel badly that we may have exposed others to illness.

- Natasha K, Frederick, MD

As a state employee, I am fortunate to receive generous paid leave, including sick leave. When my child was 10 months old, she suddenly needed cardiac surgery. She was hospitalized for 5 weeks. Knowing that I had paid sick leave and that my job would not be in jeopardy, I was able to focus on the most important thing - my family. I cannot believe that other families could find themselves in similar situations AND have to worry about losing income and/or jobs IN ADDITION to worrying about their children.

- Elizabeth M, Severn, MD

MASSACHUSETTS

As an infectious diseases specialist and mom, I know paid sick days make economic and medical sense. Let’s spread commonsense and not germs!

- Geneve A, Melrose, MA
In 2014, I had Enterovirus D68, and I have Asthma and was in the hospital three times because of it. Everyone needs and deserves paid sick days so viruses don’t spread so easily.

– Judy W, Springfield, 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. This is a crisis that is fairly easily solved!

– Laura B, Boston, MA

As a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, I see parents face heart-wrenching dilemmas when there is a sick child but they fear the loss of a job. Thank you for prioritizing this.

– Beth S, Amherst, MA

This would make a tremendous difference for my daughter and her husband. Even though he works full-time, his job offers no sick time or paid leave. He was out with a bad back for 2 weeks without pay! That can be so devastating for many families.

– Debbie D, Melrose, MA

This will make a HUGE difference to parents. And workers do not abuse the benefit. In my 18 years working at Harvard, I took a few sick days only when I had surgery. I was lucky to be healthy! Everyone will be healthier if sick people don’t feel obligated to go to work and spread their colds and flu.

– Karen C, Boston, MA

I worked all my life at low pay jobs and I can tell you stories of going to work sick. Paid sick days needed to be passed 30 years ago, so let’s do this for ourselves and for the well being of our children.

– Gary B, Southbridge, MA

It is hard to be able to take care of a sick child and having to go back to work and feel chastised for caring for your child. Please support paid sick days for all of us hard working Americans.

– Adam V, Farmington, MA

I knocked on doors to help paid sick days become law in MA so people like me, part-time faculty in our public colleges, could accrue sick days. We need to extend that to all.

– Betsy S, Brewster, MA

I work full-time as a psychotherapist in community mental health where we are described as “fee for service” workers, meaning we only get paid for the time we spend sitting with a client, not for the time we spend doing endless paperwork, obtaining client authorizations, etc. We get No Sick Days, No Vacation Days, No Holidays, No Snow Days, and I get paid less today than I did 25 years ago when I started practicing. Thank god the work with the clients “feeds my soul.” Feeding myself and my cats are another story entirely. Seven years with Not One Paid Day off, even when I had a double mastectomy. I was back at work, drains and all within 2 weeks from the day I had the surgery. So yes, I do believe that we should all be entitled to receive paid sick days.

– Jean S, Cummington, 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!!

– Andrea D, West Roxbury, MA

I have worked all my life at low pay jobs and I can tell you stories of going to work sick. Paid sick days needed to be passed 30 years ago, so let’s do this for ourselves and for the well being of our children.

– Gary B, Southbridge, MA

“PRESENTEEISM,” OR WORKERS PERFORMING AT LESS THAN FULL PRODUCTIVITY BECAUSE OF ILLNESS IS ESTIMATED TO COST $160 MILLION/yr TWICE AS MUCH AS THE COST OF ABSENTEEISM DUE TO ILLNESS

As a retired twenty year fourth grade teacher, this campaign has reminded me of the suffering I saw of children who came to school sick. Not only did the sick one suffer, but also classmates who often caught the disease and either missed school or came to school, perpetuating the illness cycle.

– Maureen K, Longmeadow, 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.

– Anita M, Worcester, MA

I worked for 9 years for the largest employer in the world and could not get paid sick days even when suffering a major heart attack on my employer’s watch.

– Judy W, Worcester, MA

I am a father and businessman who provides these basic rights to all of my employees. To not do so is unthinkable!

– Tedd S, Boston, MA

We voted for it in Massachusetts, as you know. Now let’s get it done nationally.

– John D, Burlington, MA

My mother works at a nursing home as a nurse’s aide and takes care of many people with little to no help from staff members. She has worked there for over 30 years and has even worked while sick. Some family members have thanked her for what she has done for their loved ones. I advocate strongly for paid sick leave for everyone. Thank you.

– Andrew C, Norwood, MA

Massachusetts voted for this, now it is time to pass paid sick time nationally. Please support families keeping the jobs they have.

– Lakshmi S, Ipswich, MA

On November 4, 2014, nearly 60% of voters in Massachusetts approved a statewide ballot measure to guarantee paid sick time. Under Massachusetts’ paid sick time law, workers in businesses with 11 or more employees are able to earn and use up to 40 hours of paid sick time a year for personal or family health issues. Workers in smaller businesses are able to earn and use up to 40 hours of job-protected unpaid sick time a year.

Now it’s time to establish a national paid sick days standard.


As a part-time community college faculty member, I get no sick days. When I had my breast cancer surgery, I scheduled it so that I wouldn’t miss a class, even though my surgeon recommended that I take a week off. We all need paid sick days.

– Melanie R, Danvers, MA

MICHIGAN

My husband works 28 hours per week for a hotel. He cannot earn any paid time off, and if he calls off sick from work without a 24 hour notice (who always has a 24 hour notice of being ill or our baby being ill?) he can be written up, which reflects negatively on his otherwise perfect job performance.

– Kristi M, Troy, MI

When I was young and so were my kids, I got in a lot of trouble for taking time off work for being sick or the kids being sick. By the time I was in my forties, our contract was changed and we were allowed to take planned vacation days one at a time. If my supervisor allowed it I could just take a vacation day by calling in to work.

In 2001, I had to have heart surgery and had to use vacation time for it. Every year I used up most of my vacation time for sick days. Since I had over 30 yrs. seniority my vacation time was 6 weeks a year by then. Some years, I ran out and was repeatedly warned about absenteeism.

Many times I worked when I was too sick to be there. I had to keep my job. My co-workers understood because they had to do the same. However, no one enjoys being around someone who is obviously very sick.

– Barbara H, Cadmus, MI

It would mean so much to know I could stay home with my daughter when she is sick without losing a day of pay.

– Stephanie C, Canton, MI

I work for the hospital and health system at one of the major universities and we are not afforded sick days, but the cam-
pus side of the university has sick days. Does this make sense to anyone?
Most of us come to work sick because we can’t afford to take an unpaid day at home, causing more illness in the office. Stop this madness please!
– Maryann F, Ann Arbor, MI

Without paid sick days, I would have lost my job when my mother died followed by my husband 5 months later. I earned paid sick days at a rate of 4 hours per pay period and know the value of the accumulation.
– Rebecca C, Detroit, MI

I have worked sick more times than I can calculate but there are several instances that I want to describe. At the convenience mart, I had a coughing jag that on two occasions made a customer flee out the door, leaving his selection untransacted.
During my last 2 years as a truck driver, I had to pry my eyes open an hour before I was obliged to continue down the road because of double conjunctivitis. After my 6 month project at a refinery and close proximity to asbestos removal, I was nervous about a dry cough and hastened to get an xray. My moist recent and last paid sick day was in 1997.
– Jonathan S, Saugatuck, MI

It’s hard enough paying for medical treatment (high deductible insurance doesn’t cover sick visits). Loosing pay to care for a sick child is a financial hardship.
– Kim T, East Lansing, MI

I am so grateful for the paid sick days I have. When my husband had a heart attack only 6 months after our wedding, I was able to take the time off from work I needed and help take care of him in the hospital after two surgeries. I have no idea what I would have done if I couldn’t be by his side during this scary medical crisis.
– Elyssa S, Ann Arbor, MI

My husband pays sick days to his five employees, despite lack of volume in his business. This is necessary to not have to pass germs on to others in the office, as well as care for a child or other family member.
– Marguerite P, Bingham Farms, MI

When I was young and so were my kids, I got in a lot of trouble for taking time off work for being sick or the kids being sick. By the time I was in my forties, our contract was changed and we were allowed to take planned vacation days one at a time.
If my supervisor allowed it I could just take a vacation day by calling in to work. I have severe migraines and vertigo, so taking vacation days to replace not having sick days, saved my job.
In 2001, I had to have heart surgery and had to use vacation time for it. Every year I used up most of my vacation time for sick days. Since I had over 30 yrs. seniority my vacation time was 6 weeks a year by then.
Some years, I ran out and was repeatedly warned about absenteeism. Many times I worked when I was too sick to be there. I had to keep my job. My co-workers understood because they had to do the same.
– Kim Z, Champlin, MN

I work in health care and can loose my job if I need to stay home sick. Therefore, I go to work and take the risk.
– Wanda T, Annandale, 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, & losing income from a lost day of work.
– Barb K, Montevideo, MN

MORE THAN HALF OF LATINOS ARE UNABLE TO EARN A SINGLE SICK DAY THROUGH THEIR JOBS


I am a single mother of a child with a disability. I rely on paid sick time to take my son to important, preventative healthcare visits. Without this workplace protection, my job would be at risk along with my son’s health. Too many families do not have this much needed workplace protection.
– Charlie R, Rochester, MN

My husband hasn’t ever had paid sick days as an electrician, and working a physically taxing job means that he usually becomes sicker than anyone else in our family ever does.
– Amy D, Minneapolis, MN

This is an issue *very* close to my heart: I have family members working at full-time jobs who have *no* sick days and who are having to delay medical care in fear of losing their jobs for taking time off to go to a doctor.
– Alice B, Crystal, MN

A while ago, I worked as a waitress and had no sick leave. I remember working when I was quite sick. Who knows how many people I made sick by serving them food!
– Suzanne H, St. Paul, MN

Of all the things that posed problems for me when my sons were little, the most worrisome was care when they were sick. I had two very sick little ones and the thought of me not being there to care for them was heartbreaking--no one else can supply the care necessary for a sick child like a parent.
– Kim Z, Champlin, MN

I work in health care and can loose my job if I need to stay home sick. Therefore, I go to work and take the risk.
– Wanda T, Annandale, 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, & losing income from a lost day of work.
– Barb K, Montevideo, MN
Having sick time is so very important.... so you don’t have to go to work sick, so you can take a day to take care of your sick child, your sick grandmother who lives with you and takes care of the kids. It’s vital....Please!!

– Trish P, St. Paul, MN

I had the support of sick time when an illness could have put me in debt I could never have recovered from. As a nurse I know sick workers make others sick.

– Pat M, St. Paul, MN

With three young children and three un-paid maternity leaves, no paid sick days left & strict policies at my place of work around how/when I could use my vacation days (could not use them for sick days), I was forced to go to work with the stomach flu because I did not have paid sick days. I couldn’t even stay home with my babies when they were sick because I did not have any paid sick days.

I eventually quit my job after 8 years & took a pay cut because of not having adequate access to paid sick days.

– Katy S, Bloomington, MN

I am a member of the Minnesota Nurses Association. Nurses need sick time because we care for immunocompromised, vulnerable people AND because we are exposed to sick people and myriad potential infections in the course of our work every shift.

– Elizabeth S, St. Paul, MN

A less than adequate third choice, vs. sending the sick child to school, or losing a day’s pay to stay home, is often having an older child miss school to stay home with a younger sick sibling. There are no good options.

– Cathryn P, Minneapolis, MN

I recently had my second child. After I returned from maternity leave, my entire family was plagued with one illness after another. One upper respiratory illness actually put my infant daughter in the hospital overnight.

Having paid sick days to take a few days to help her recover made all the difference in her quick recovery. If I would not have had sick time, I would likely be struggling financially, have had to use public assistance programs, and possibly would have lost a job.

Every family deserves this basic provision. If we believe in family values, then we must allow for all Americans to have sick time.

– Theresa F, Saint Cloud, MN

I am lucky enough to be in a union job where I have paid sick days. I have needed them to care for my wife when she had an operation last week and to spend time in another state with my father when he had a broken hip last year.

Everyone deserves paid sick time.

– Allan M, St. Paul, MN

After my divorce from an abusive man in 1980, I worked at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis campus. We earned paid sick and vacation days. I was able to stay home with the kids when they were sick, and stay home when I was sick without losing pay.

That gave me great peace of mind. I didn’t realize until recently that so many people don’t have these BASIC benefits. It doesn’t make sense to require sick people to come to work or lose pay: they can and probably will infect other people, and get sicker themselves. It’s inhumane AND bad business practice.

– Helen H, St. Paul, MN

In 2016, both the Minneapolis and St. Paul city councils passed earned sick time ordinances, allowing all employees to earn up to 48 hours of paid sick time each year. Minneapolis’ ordinance allows for the same amount of sick time but requires businesses with five or fewer employees to provide job-protected sick leave, not paid sick leave.

I am lucky enough to be employed by an organization who already shares my values and provides sick day leave, but many of my friends and families aren’t as lucky. I write to you for them.

- Nick H, Starkville, MS

MISSOURI

After working part-time, 52 weeks a year, for seven years, my employer still deems us unworthy of a single sick day. It is hard to take a day off of work, because I can’t afford to lose the day’s wages. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE. My bosses all make $100,000+, and I am struggling, taking home about $1000 a month. It’s hard to even get food on the table. Thank you for your time.

- Jennifer G, St. Louis, MO

Please, consider people’s bodies: I was often able to subvert a 2-week illness by taking a single sick day before I got super-sick. Everyone should have that privilege, even children.

- Carla B, Saint Charles, MO

Most restaurant workers do not have paid sick days. Many are even fired for taking an UNpaid sick day! Think about that the next time you eat out.

- Mary K, St. Louis, 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?

- Sara D, Independence, MO

I was a SLPS teacher. We were “allowed” 10 sick days a year BUT if we took 6 or more, we were marked “Unsatisfactory”! As a divorced mom of 2 boys w/ severe allergies, I ONLY stayed home when THEY were sick. So I HAVE taught so sick w/migraines I could hardly stand up.

- Patricia M, St. Louis, MO

I worked in food service for 20 years. Due to the low wage, no matter how sick and contagious I was, I still worked. Coworkers often caught it from me and I would hate to think of how many customers also caught my illness.

- Jennifer J, St. Louis, MO

If my job didn’t provide paid sick days, our family would have been devastated. I had a miscarriage that forced me to be off work for a month. Because I had earned sick time, loss of pay wasn’t an issue and my house payment and utilities were paid. I also had a sick child later and because I had negotiated benefits that allow me earned sick time, I never lost pay or had issues with paying my bills. I believe paid sick time not only help families, it helps our economy.

- Toni, Lee’s Summit, MO

MONTANA

So many working parents have no one to turn to if their kid gets sick. Daycare won’t take them. They can’t send a sick kid to school. They can’t leave the kid home alone. So they need to be able to stay home and take care of the sick kid at home. And not worry that their job will be in jeopardy.

- Clare R, Columbia Falls, MT

As a book keeper for a construction company, I completely support paid sick days. Our guys will work when they are sick, just to have the wage, getting others sick when working.

- Lucinda G, Billings, 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.

- Kim O, Missoula, MT

NEBRASKA

When I was raising my 4 children, I worked for the local symphony. I liked it until my boss demanded I not visit my Mom the day she had cancer surgery. He was shocked when I left to take a teaching post.

- Marie R, Omaha, NE
I have paid sick days. I usually use them for my son, but I currently use the time to go to my prenatal appointments. Since doctor’s offices keep bankers hours, I have to take time off of work to get adequate care.

I am fortunate that a few hours here and there wouldn’t break me, but being able to HAVE THE RIGHT to take the time is very important. It allows me to be justified in taking time off for appointments and for illness.

– Sara, NE

NEVADA

As things get tighter and tighter these days, it would be nice if you made it a law that all Americans get paid sick days off. As a single Mom, I can’t even take a sick day off due to sickness because that will mean either food or living expenses have to give and to play catch up is very difficult. Thank you for doing the right thing for all moms and dads.

– Deborah B, Henderson, NV

I have 4 grand babies and when one member of the family get sick, it travels fast to the next person and next thing you, the whole family is sick so yes, please pass paid sick days!

– Lorna S, Las Vegas, NV

As a mom that went back to work when my youngest started first grade, I really needed paid sick days to ensure that I didn’t have to send my kids to school when they were sick and also to be able to take care of myself so that I could care for them properly. I was privileged to have an employer who provided sick leave that also included family as well as self. So many do not have these advantages but everyone should!

– Trudy K, Reno, NV

When my daughter, Sarah was sick and I needed to take time off to be with her, eventually I always ended up having to fight for my job. I am lucky I have a husband who was able to shoulder the entire task of providing for the family. Others are not so lucky. Years ago, I remember my boss telling me I had to fire an employee that had missed worked again because he had to take off to care for his twin sons with cancer.

It was awful and I got in trouble for taking too long in the meeting because I thought it was important to have resources available to him before he left. They wanted me to just give him the number for the unemployment office and send him on his way. I understood his need to be with his kids and it was worse for him because he knew his kids were extremely sick and could die shortly. (I know what THAT feels like).

– Celeste B, North Las Vegas, NV

NEW HAMPSHIRE

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!!

– Susan, Claremont, NH

I know women who have been fired for calling out sick from work because they had to care for a sick child. This is so wrong. We are way down on the list of “advanced” countries on so many aspects of daily life that affect families. This has to change.

– Paula C, Hooksett, NH

I just lost my brand-new dream job because I got really sick. It was a good job, and a job where I would have qualified for FMLA if I’d been there a year. But I’m going to be OK, because I am single and I have no kids and I save money like a squirrel.

I will eventually get better and find a new job. But imagine what my life would be like right now if I had a kid. We’d be screwed. #SaveTheFamilies!

– Megan E, Durham, NH

I have been one of the fortunate people who have had paid sick days. I have only used those days when it was truly necessary. I have lived paycheck to paycheck much of my life so knowing I would be paid made all the difference between paying my bills and feeding my family (not to mention not having to worry about getting fired for calling out sick).

I have known people who have not been...
so fortunate - people who have gone to work between cancer treatments and people who work with the public who have gone to work and spread their germs around.

- Paula C, Hooksett, NH

NEW JERSEY

I work for a business magazine and have no paid sick days. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve had to take unpaid time off or go to work sick (and risk making others sick because my family couldn’t afford for me to take the time off). This must change if we want to protect public health and reduce insurance costs for everyone.

- Alyssa W, West Orange, NJ

As a health disparities researcher, I have seen cases in which people forced themselves to work when ill, and lost hours and even were fired when they took time to attend medical appointments.

- Debra P, Hoboken, NJ

Last week I attended my cousin’s funeral, he was just 34 years old. Our grief at his sudden tragic death was compounded by the knowledge that his death could have been prevented if he was able to take time off from work to get the medical help and rest he needed without fear of being fired for doing so.

My cousin died from septicemia following pneumonia. Pneumonia would have never led to septicemia in such a young, otherwise, healthy person, if he could have taken the time off that he needed to let his body heal. He did not have this option without fear of being fired. Please support paid sick days so other families won’t have to suffer the same fate as mine.

- Jennifer Q, Manchester, NJ

As a daycare worker, I receive no sick days. This is an absurd situation. No worker should have to work while ill and spread the illness to the children in their care.

- Ruth Boice, Vincentown, NJ

I have personally benefited from paid sick days from my employer, allowing me to care for both a sick child and a sick wife at the same time. This helped me help my family.

It also ensured that I didn’t have to make a choice between care and a paycheck or going in sick and risking public health or risking my own economic health.

- Nathan, Trenton, NJ

Not only is it hard for me to get full time work, but I also do NOT get paid sick time. Just because I work in retail doesn’t mean I’m worth any less than, say, someone who is an accountant for a large company.

Dealing with the public means dealing with germs and viruses...while these people are picking up their prescriptions and whatever they need to feel better, they raise my chances of getting their illnesses! And I have to suffer extra for this?!

- Denise L, Fords, NJ

I am a teacher who always has a couch in her classroom for the poor kids who have to come to school while they are sick. My heart aches for them.....and for their Moms who are forced into sending a sick child to school (incidentally, exposing teacher and a full class to the bacteria they are carrying.) Everyone loses.

- Edwina, Mountain Lakes, NJ

I am a salaried H.R. Manager for a home health care agency. This year my employer decided I’m no longer eligible for sick time solely because I work less than 40 hours per week. Ironic, given that we work in health “care”.

- Joanne J, Midland Park, NJ

When I was working for the Superior Court of Sussex County, New Jersey, my 10 year old daughter was sick. I asked the Judge if I could leave 1 hour earlier to get home to her. He said “NO”. It was okay for him to end court proceeding to go to an event for his daughter, but I could not leave 1 hour early to attend to a sick child.

- Theda Z, Sussex County, NJ

Because I had no sick days while working as a temporary scientist, when I was coming down with double pneumonia, I did not get to go to a hospital or a doctor and I almost died. I ended up being in-
tensive care for over 2 weeks with a tube stuck down my throat, and I am now in massive debt. This should not happen to a citizen of one of the richest countries in the world, and in the State of New Jersey. Every other advanced country has sick leave, why not America? Why not New Jersey?

– Jeff S, Ridgefield Park, NJ

A few years back, my oldest daughter got the chicken pox and needed to be home from daycare for over a week. Within 2 days of her recovery, her little sister came down with chicken pox too. If I hadn’t been able to take sick days to care for them, I don’t know what I would have done.

– Sandra D, Boonton, NJ

NEW MEXICO

My husband, in his late 50s, like myself, has been a full time worker all his life. However, in his case, a sick day is a no pay day. This is very typical for the millions who make their living doing sales.

– Debbi B, Santa Fe, NM

I own a small business and provide my employees with paid sick and family leave. It’s a win-win for them and me - fewer concerns about spreading illness in the workplace, happier employees with higher morale and loyalty, more productive workers who aren’t sick or worrying about family members. Lawmakers should know that paid sick days will benefit businesses too.

– Susan J, Albuquerque, NM

As a critical care nurse I know first hand what illness can do to a family. Working parents often have a struggle to balance things out in the best of times. Loss of pay due to illness can put a family on the track to welfare. That is not the American way!

– Deb S, Carrboro, NM

As a teacher, I’ve also had to nurse sick kids in my class because their families could not take time off to let them stay home. Sick kids deserve to get well at home!

– Kelly M, Alameda, NM

I am so grateful that when my daughter was ill, both my husband and I had paid sick leave days available to stay home and take care of her. Every employee should have the same basic protections.

– Dinah J, Las Cruces, NM

I am an adjunct instructor at Central New Mexico Community College. We finally received sick pay 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.

How embarrassing to the college, that professionals would be in classrooms teaching very ill. Everyone did it. 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 went to work ill.

– Jennifer V, Placitas, NM

NEW YORK

My daughter is in the position, as a post-double mastectomy survivor whose COBRA ended (because her ex-employer went out of business), of putting off followup surgery both because she can’t afford it and because she’d lose her pay as a contract worker.

– Ruth M, Pound Ridge, NY

Please help, my brother has cancer and needs all the help he can get.

– Debbie T, Amsterdam, NY

Please give people an opportunity to earn paid sick days! I have HIV and I do not want sick people providing me any services; I don’t want to catch their illness!

– Crystal M, Johnson City, NY

Until recently, my job did not offer paid sick days to its part-time employees. Thus, I’ve gone to work with pinkeye while another co-worker has come in with the flu. Having paid sick days would have enabled both of us to stay home, recover and “not” spread our germs to everyone on the NYC transit system & in our workplace.

– Victoria L, New York, NY

Please – my husband doesn’t have sick days and goes into work when he shouldn’t because we can’t afford a day off.

– Danielle M, Fairport, 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.

– Constance E, Suffern, NY

Paid sick days are essential. When you work, you need to be healthy. The cost to the employer is minimal when you consider not only the lost time of the employee but the lost time of their fellow employees if they give them the sickness. Paid sick days are essential to prosperity.

– John A, Harrisburg, NY

I was VERY fortunate to have paid sick days when I was a teacher. Since I got a cold every year because being near kids makes you very vulnerable, I was able to take two days to recover and return to my class healthy and happy again without stressing my finances (I was a single Mom).

– Yolanda E, New York City, NY

I can’t even count the times I went to work sick because I didn’t have paid sick days. It does one’s fellow employees no good to be exposed to whatever is going around because one of their team members is a single parent and can’t afford to lose pay when sick.

– Judith B, Ithaca, NY

I have had personal experience as a single parent with no paid sick days. No woman should have to further endanger her health or that of her coworkers, or weaken her ability to care for her children.

– Hettie J, New York, NY

I’ve missed so many days of work this month due to two sick girls at home. Luckily I’m self-employed, but I often think of all the moms who are NOT and
forced to send their sick kids to school. Please make earned sick days a reality for hard working families!!

– Kerry M, Ithaca, NY

Having been an administrator, I know that morale and productivity go so high with paid family leave and paid sick days. That saves money!

– Sarah W, Syracuse, NY

I’m home sick today, lucky to exercise a right all working people deserve!

– Laura M, New York, NY

I am a single mother of 5 in this exact position (of not having paid sick days). I am not allowed to call in to my job or I will be fired.

– Lindsay V, Rochester, NY

As someone who hasn’t had a paid sick day in 29 years, I fully support legislation to require paid sick days for the millions of us who don’t have them.

– Donna G, Rochester, NY

As an elementary school teacher for 36 years, I know first hand the critical importance of parents having paid sick days. When their child is sick in school, the child needs parental help to get them to a doctor.

I’ve seen children suffer because a parent was not able to pick them up quickly. ALL working parents MUST have paid sick days!

– Joanna C, White Plains, NY

I have Duchenne muscular dystrophy and my mother has had to miss countless days of work whenever I am short on healthcare staff when I lived with her. She has actually lost jobs because employers never believed I’m disabled when I wasn’t wheelchair-bound.

Even now when I have been living on my own for five years, she has had to miss out on work which makes her lose out on a paycheck which infringes on her life and bills and also on my own independence. We need an upgrade in paid sick days and family medical leave with it being paid instead of unpaid.

– Robert O, East Aurora, NY

My wife and I are parents of 3 children and have elderly parents on both sides of the family. The public health aspect of this alone is something that should’ve been done 20 years ago.

– Cornell C, Bronx, NY

Having spent the last three days at home with a child that had a 104 degree fever, I know how important paid sick leave is! I can’t imagine what I would do if I had to choose between caring for a very sick child and keeping my job or putting food on the table.

– Kerry M, Ithaca, NY

As a teacher I was disgusted to see more and more sick children being sent to school, where all the other children and the teacher (that’s me) are being infected because the parent could not keep their sick child home for they would lose their pay, and, in some cases, their jobs.

– Constance E, Suffern, NY

I’m sure my co-workers would have appreciated my staying home when I had the flu and was working with a fever of 102.5, but my pay was so low that I couldn’t afford to lose several days’ pay to get well.

– Judith B, Ithaca, NY

As a church minister, I financially assist hard working people who do not have paid sick days. They are nurse and teacher aides and adjunct professors. People who care for elderly &/or disabled and infants and children need sick days with pay and living wages. They do important work as do adjunct professors who cannot live on the meager income they earn while trying to eek out a living traveling from college to college to teach. I have been helping 2 teacher aides for 13 years. One has been ill, had surgery and received no pay the entire time of recovery. They both need assistance paying rent, buying food, paying for needed car repairs, meds and insurance.

– Deni M, Fairport, NY

I have been a proud IUE union member starting at General Electric and transitioning into Lockheed Martin for 34 years. Thanks to my union and others, all employees at LM have paid sick leave. I have avoided infecting my coworkers with severe colds, flu and even pneumonia, and have been able to afford recovering from severe injuries and other illnesses without risk of unpaid bills or worse financial woes.

It is not an exaggeration to say I might have been disabled or died had I not had the opportunity to seek medical help without fear of severe debt. Paid sick days are a reasonable way to ensure maximum productivity in the workforce by simply allowing the ill to heal.

– Robert V, Syracuse, NY

NORTH CAROLINA

As a working mom, this issue is near and dear to my heart. I can’t afford to make myself sicker by working when sick, and I can’t afford not to work when my kids are sick. Yet, who can I ask to babysit sick kids? And my family scrapes by in
the low-middle-class. There are so many who don’t even have the options WE have. Please take care of American families and set rules for paid sick leave!

– Kari R, Asheville, NC

I work part-time, so I do not earn sick time. With the number of illnesses my children give me, there are some days when I just need to stay at home, for myself and so that I do not pass something on to healthy individuals.

I work at a University with a hospital, and ride a public bus, so there is lots of opportunity to spread disease to people who work with very sick individuals. Paid sick time would help keep healthy people away from people who endanger those with weak immune systems, or their doctors and nurses.

And for me, paid sick time would also allow me to occasionally take a day or two when I am sick without worrying about the impact on our finances (I still have to pay for daycare even when my children do not attend because we are sick). Paid sick leave is good for public health, and for workers like myself, who are very common in this new, unstable economy.

– Sara S, Durham, NC

I’ve seen too many people come in to work to many times running a fever, snot pouring from their nose because they don’t want to lose their job. One week later half the floor is sick, yet our bosses fail to see the profit in letting that person go to the doctor or stay home. It’s time for a change.

– James S, Mocksville, NC

I am a neonatal RN in an ICU. I know firsthand how important paid sick days are!

– Claire-Elisabeth H, Chapel Hill, NC

I have run small businesses for 34 years. We have always offered this and it never hurt our business in the least. It just makes sense.

– Duke W, Durham, 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!

– Frances D, Goldsboro, NC

I just got over the flu. Stayed home for 4 days without pay – ouch!

– Yvonne L, Winston Salem, NC

This is an issue which impacted me several years ago, after my husband had 2 strokes within 7 months. I almost lost my job several years ago because of “points” accrued due to missed work. I also have a friend who lost his job due to personal illness. That’s simply wrong!

– Jennifer G, Durham, NC

I have worked in retail for 35 years. I can tell you that retail workers are a primary source of contagion due to the extreme difficulty of obtaining and using sick leave.

– Margaret S, Murphy, NC

I don’t have any sick days - ever - and believe it is necessary for our society and our families. How can we possibly function without sick days?

– Ann H, Matthews, NC

I work for a very small credit union and the new president took away paid sick days. We only have PTO which we only accrue at the start of each month. We aren’t given the time right up front at the start of a new year. It’s extremely hard for new employees to accrue any.

I just recently had to stay out for 3 days because both my 3 year and 6 month old became sick. I was so nervous and scared to call out and stay out of work for fear of a) losing my job and b) losing money on my check. This is something NO parent or person should ever have to experience. We shouldn’t have to make these decisions when we or family members fall ill. It’s only natural for people to fall sick and need time to get better and not stress over whether bills will be able to be paid or if a job will be lost. Please help us change this. Thank you so much.

– Tracy W, Stem, NC

As a single parent and a professional working full-time, paid sick leave was essential not only for the care of my son, but also for my elderly 90 year old parents. My son who was a NICU survivor and graduate, is now a very bright college bound young adult. While working full time and raising my son, I also was the primary caregiver for both my elderly mother and father. Both gave their heart and soul for this country during WWII, my dad a Pearl Harbor survivor-then a Railway Express Agency truck driver and my mom an oil tank driver and then served as a postmaster for 33 years. I was able to provide a healthy safe nurturing stable environment for my son and for my parents during their end of life transitions. I also was able to attend to my health care needs because of paid sick days. Paid sick days are not a luxury, they were a necessity for me as an individual to sustain healthy functioning as a responsible parent, daughter and employee in the field of mental health; we all have much to contribute to achieving successful outcomes for our families and communities.

– Carolyn Y, Walkertown, NC
Both my wife and I were public school teachers who are eternally grateful for up to 10 paid sick days per year—cumulative for up to a year. We didn’t use all of them, but the availability gave us peace of mind, enabling us to do a better job teaching.

— William H, Tryon, NC

I lived and worked in the UK for 4 years. My employer, by law offered unlimited sick days, and I couldn’t understand what that meant when I was explained my benefits for employment. I asked “Don’t employees take advantage of sick days, then?” My employer looked at me sideways and explained “Why would they? We have great vacation packages. When you’re sick, you’re sick.” In 4 years of employment, I never knew a colleague to abuse his/her sick days. If employees are given more flexibility for taking sick days when they’re sick, then they feel appreciated, cared for, and more importantly, they feel as though they can work hard when they’re at work knowing they can take a day off if they’re unwell. Do the right thing for your employees, America. Help us to do better every day by allowing us the ability to recover and rest when we are not well.

— Alexandrea P, Cornelius, NC

I’m a mother of four. I work in childcare. I don’t make a whole lot to start with. I end up using 98% of my vacation time to stay home with a sick child. Paid sick days would be such a huge help for my family.

— Arlette R, Elm City, 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!

— Kathryn G, Southern Pines, NC

My husband had the flu this winter. We can and should do better.

— Sadie K, Durham, NC

I work for a hospital in North Carolina, and upon being hired I was told that I had 4 ‘excused’ sick days a year. I was hired in the middle of flu season and my 3 year old had just started preschool, so, naturally, she stayed sick for a solid 3 months and I took off multiple days to stay home with her. I caught the flu and various colds from her five times, and I worked through every single episode of sickness because I was forced to save my sick days for her. Upon reaching my 4th ‘excused’ sick day in the year (in a 6 month period), I was pulled into my Director’s office and told that I had reached my maximum number of sick days and from now on, every time I called in, I would receive a disciplinary write up. I have an above-average work ethic. I consistently perform my job beyond the expectations that are set before me, I am well-liked and I am efficient.

Taking a sick day does not affect my work ethic, nor does it negatively affect anyone in my workplace. I wish I didn’t have to take sick days; when I am forced to, I not only am losing a day of work that I desperately need in order to afford our $9,800 a year child care (the average, if not less than average, cost of child care in our state), I am then looked down upon by my directors and considered ‘lazy’ and ‘flaky’. How is it that, if I miss work for the sake of my children and my own health, I am considered ‘lazy’, ‘un-professional’, and ‘flaky’, yet, if my male coworkers missed work for the sake of their children or their own health, they are praised for it? I was told that if I missed 7 days of work in a single work year, I would be fired. This isn’t personal, it’s policy, and it’s wrong. I care more about my child’s health than I do an outdated Human Resources rule, so I guess if I or my daughter get sick again, I will be looking for another job.

— Rebekah L, Arden, NC

My husband is a cook, making barely over minimum wage. I’m disabled and receiving SSI. He doesn’t get paid sick days, which is the norm for the food service industry. I’ve seen him get up sick as a dog, and say ‘I can’t afford to be sick’ then leave for work. There have been times when he’s running a fever so high he can barely remember driving to work. This puts not only him, but other drivers, his coworkers, and the restaurants customers at risk. Whether or not he ever gets into a car accident because he’s too sick to be out of bed, or whether it’s exposing everyone around him to whatever he has, it’s just not right. But he’s correct -- we can’t afford for him to be sick. If he takes days off without pay, then his paycheck is short and the bills or the rent get behind, and catching up is nearly impossible.

— Sheryl J, Clayton, NC

Millions of working people provide care for family members who are older adults, have disabilities or are chronically ill, including end of life care

ONLY ABOUT HALF OF ALL FAMILY CAREGIVERS WHO HAVE PAYING JOBS CAN ACCESS PAID SICK DAYS


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Recently I needed surgery and would not have been able to afford the time away from work without paid sick days. Most procedures have a required recuperation period and this is necessary to prevent complications with healing. In a nation that is so advanced why are we not taking care of PEOPLE?

– Angela B, Hillsborough, NC

Just last week, I took 2 paid sick days to stay in the hospital w/ my dad who fell, so they could do testing to see if he had a stroke, etc. I am so thankful that I have paid sick days to do this. I am a single mom and my dad is recently separated, so it is up to me and my sister to oversee his care.

– Monica, Boone, NC

In the First 2 Years of Life Alone, Most Kids Have 8-10 Colds

IN THE FIRST 2 YEARS OF LIFE ALONE, MOST KIDS HAVE 8-10 Colds


NORTH DAKOTA

Sick days have helped me to stay home when my children are sick AND when I am sick. I have found that if I stay home a day to rest when I get sick, the time required to recover is far less. At minimum, people should not be penalized for having to stay home due to sickness. I know of some people who not only don’t get paid, but get points knocked against them for having to stay home due to sickness.

– Julie, ND

OHIO

Three of my adult single daughters work and have no paid sick days. If they don’t go to work they cannot meet their bills. This is outrageous. Everyone should have sick days.

– Mary S, Stow, OH

I have no paid time off. I have no health insurance. I pay out of pocket and make payment arrangements for my son’s healthcare. In order to pay my bills, I work sick because that is my only option.

– Courtney R, Columbus, OH

I am one of the 40 million Americans who do not have paid sick time. I work in a professional position for a large local government and have been employed there for nearly 16 years, however I work part-time so am not eligible for paid sick time. My daughter actually didn’t feel well this morning but I pumped her up with Ibuprofen and hope to at least get a few hours in. I can’t afford to miss pay right before Christmas!

– Amy K, Columbus, OH

As small business owners, we have given sick days for 43 years and will continue to do so. There is no reason not to. It’s about respect and appreciation of our employees and their families.

– Eric and Tess K, Medina, OH

Everyone gets sick once in while. Being sick shouldn’t mean you don’t eat today.

– Julie V, Cleveland, OH

This is personal - my daughter is a working single mother of a child in elementary school. She struggles every time he’s sick to find care for him if she (or I) have to work. This lose-lose situation could easily be changed to a win-win scenario with a change in policy. This is simply common sense. We want people to be able to work. We want children to get well when they’re sick (preferably at home). Parents who need time off to take care of sick children should not lose their jobs.

– Wendy J, Columbus, OH

When I am sick, I can take it on the chin. When my kids are sick, my own work plans collapse. We need permission to be human.

– Christina P, Columbus, OH

As a preschool teacher, I have seen what happens when parents cannot stay home when their children are sick. They give their little ones Tylenol and bring them to school/daycare. By the time their fever returns, they have exposed teachers and children to the illness if contagious. Or, when we realize the child might have an ear infection we have to call the parent at work so then can come and get their child who must be isolated because of the fever. Instead of possibly one day, the illness now is stretched to two, three or even four days. Here are many examples where paid sick days would benefit families and the economy. Let’s go for it. Support our working families!

– Karleen S, Cincinnati, OH

Children with fevers are sent home from school. Parents who go to work sick make others sick. Having sick leave helps schools, children, parents and the owners of businesses who lose money when illnesses spreads through their facilities.

– Janet D, West Chester, OH

When children get sick, what are we supposed to do? We can’t leave the child home alone. And I live in the northeast with regular snow storms. Our children had more than 5 snow days last year.

– Ann M, Concord Twp, OH

As a full time working mom of 4, I am fortunate enough to have paid sick days and without it my husband and I could not afford to have me working in a job I love! Everyone should have the right to paid sick days not only for job stability but especially for public health concerns.

– Autumn T, Columbus, OH

When you make $8-12 an hour, you can’t AFFORD to take off sick days. Low wage jobs FIRE you for two days sick in a row! Please help families not have to decide on going in SICK to work and getting everyone else sick vs. staying home IN bed and healing.

– Teresa K, Kent, OH
I used to work by the hour. So, if I, my child or severe weather kept me from going to work, it was a financial hit! No work, no pay! Also the shaming from my employer! How dare I stay home with my sick son! How dare I get sick and need to stay home! How dare the weather is dangerous and I have to stay home with my son because school is having a snow day!

- Kathleen P, Shaker Heights, OH

I’m a public school based speech-language pathologist, working through a contractor. I only get 5 PTO days a year, and they can’t be carried over to the next school year. I live in Ohio and we usually have a few snow days off in winter. Those are also considered PTO days as are days taken for professional conferences.

I simply can’t afford to take sick days, even though I get sick like everyone else. I just pray I don’t need to have surgery or anything that would require time off. My Union co-workers have good sick and professional leave benefits but I don’t have the option of joining the union—it’s complicated.

- Margaret W, Yellow Springs, OH

I probably would not have been able to keep my job and retire within 30 years if it had not been for paid sick days. When you are dealing with children with asthma there are days that going to work is simply impossible. Everyone who works deserves this right.

- Linda W, Lancaster, OH

I’m a speech-language pathologist and do not get paid sick days. I can’t afford to take days off if I have a cold or flu symptoms, but I have to make that sacrifice so my clients and students don’t get sick, too.

I worry about getting a major disease or having a debilitating accident. This isn’t fair to any of us. It’s hard enough to pay my student loans and living expenses with a complete paycheck. Please do the right thing for our country!

- Margaret W, Yellow Springs, OH

I lost my job due to a pre-existing disability (immune disorder) that was exacerbated by viruses spread by co-workers who came to work despite being contagious. They could not stay home because they were given no sick time and would lose their jobs if they did not come in to work. I became very ill and was unable to come to work. I lost my job and was unable to find other employment because I was fired for being sick.

- Susan C, Wilberforce, OH

Here in Oklahoma, lots of people don’t even have the option to see a doctor when they are sick. It’s even more important that they can take a day off so the rest of us won’t get sick!

- Diana M, Bartlesville, OK

When I worked in the kitchen of a Red Lobster, it was well known that if you were sick, you were still expected to come into work. If we wanted to get paid, we had to come into work, that simple.

If we tried to call out of work for being sick, our manager would get upset and give us a lecture about how in the real world you had responsibilities and no one would be there to cover your responsibilities but you.

This was not an isolated incident at one restaurant. Just about every manager of a chain restaurant in the town of Stillwater, Oklahoma had this opinion. I’ve worked at a Walmart in Tulsa, Oklahoma, again in the kitchen area (bakery) where it was extremely common for workers to come in sick because they couldn’t afford to go without getting paid, and the managers never once talked about sending the sick worker home.

- Jill B, Okmulgee, OK

At my workplace, which is a healthcare provider, presenteeism (sick employees at work) is a significant threat to some of our fragile patients! We all need at least a small amount of paid sick days.

- Rochelle W, Ashland, OR

I remember being threatened with job termination because I needed to go home because my 5 year old had a fever of 105.4. I was supporting 5 people, counting myself, at that time.

- Dori S, Portland, OR

I am lucky to work at a company that has paid sick leave on top of separate vacation. When my daughter was born I didn’t have any paid time off for after she was born.

I was the breadwinner and not having that paycheck for 3 months about killed us. We need paid family leave too!

- Javene H, Tigard, OR
I’m an employer of 9 people and I am for having earned sick days for all employees. It is the right thing to do.
- Ken S, Salem, OR

I once worked in an office where a co-worker came to work with the flu (because they didn’t have paid sick days) and gave it to three other people, including me. Can you say “lost work days”?
- Rosalie S, Medford, OR

Do you want your waitress/waiter being sick and handling the food you eat? I sure don’t. Getting the flu can especially be serious for senior citizens and people with chronic health issues. Please protect our health.
- G S, The Dalles, OR

We've pass paid sick days in Portland and it has made an important difference for workers here. All workers in the country need this protection.
- Sharon B, Portland, OR

As a retired corporate manager I am very much in favor of instituting paid sick time. I can speak from experience about numerous times where an ill employee came to work because they couldn’t afford to stay home.

Their productivity is lessened by their illness and it would have been better for them to stay home -- especially when they expose coworkers to the illness.

Then I have even more staff missing, my productivity numbers are down and I’m not meeting my commitments to customers and the company. It would have been far smarter (and less expensive) to pay out one day of pay than risk a budgetary fiasco down the road.

- Gia M, Talent, OR

I was fortunate -- every job I ever had before I retired had paid sick leave. With chronic sinusitis and clinical depression, I needed every one of these! I could not have stayed employed without paid sick leave.

- Marian D, Portland, OR

As a teacher, I was able to care for my children when they needed me to stay home with them. All families need paid sick leave. Still, I retired with many unused days after two major surgeries. Employees do not abuse paid sick leave. They appreciate it.

- Terry B, Springfield, OR

I fought for sick days in Oregon, and we won! Now lets have it for all workers in the USA! What are you waiting for? Without paid sick days, I had to quit a job to be with my child when she had surgery. WITH paid sick days, 15 years later, I was able to care for my husband when he had a health crisis! Be on the winning side! Paid Sick Days for ALL!

- Anna P, Beaverton, OR

As a federal attorney, I was required to take advance sick leave and leave without pay to have my twin infants. Just for maternity leave. Thereafter, I carried a negative sick leave tally and even at times a negative vacation time tally (this, even after working weekends and banking vacation time for years to plan ahead, to have any maternity leave; ie, which means I had not been taking time off, and had little to no work-life balance prior to becoming a parent).

Unfortuantely, I had a sick child and health complications of my own. Undoubtedly, my poor health was exacerbated by the chronic strain of inadequate paid time off work. But I had the negative leave balances, so now every illness – no matter how routine or how severe – became occasion for extreme scrutiny. I had no privacy. Peers were informed of my problems and even – acting as supervisors – allowed to decide my benefits, ie, whether I would be granted leave without pay or be allowed to advance sick leave or be required to use/advance annual leave. I felt forced to beg for donated leave or ask for FMLA repeatedly. Essentially, my job became debt bondage. All because I dared to try to become a parent in America. As a professional.

Sadly, my health deteriorated, and I now must take disability benefits. I often wonder, if we had a culture of supporting women through childbirth, if I had been adequately paid for my time off and made to feel valued instead of chastised, would I have stayed healthier? I believe if I’d had adequate paid leave to become a parent, and paid sick days to care for a sick child, the stress burden would have lessened to a degree to have made a huge difference in my suffering. Which would have contributed to a better outcome, maybe I would even still be

20% OF WOMEN WITH CHILDREN REPORT THAT THEY OR A FAMILY MEMBER HAVE BEEN FIRED OR DISCIPLINED BY AN EMPLOYER FOR TAKING TIME OFF TO COPE WITH AN ILLNESS OR TO CARE FOR A SICK CHILD OR FAMILY MEMBER


NO!
able to work. Parenting is just not supported in America. A brain drain can be expected where intelligent people are penalized for having families.

- Sara Z, Corvallis, OR

We now have mandatory paid sick leave in Oregon & it is great!!

- Kay C, Beaverton, OR

I’d much rather have my waiter stay home when he is sick than pass norovirus to me. This actually happened by the way. My husband and I were both sick and had to go to the ER. Luckily, we had paid sick days so we didn’t contaminate anyone else. We also didn’t have to worry about losing our jobs for staying home. Really, we are better than this.

- Tracy R, Hillsboro, OR

I’ve worked many different jobs in many different States, with many different policies concerning paid sick days and I am of the opinion of ‘make it federal policy’!

- Timothy F, Portland, OR

As a Democratic State official, I sponsored a paid sick days bill which passed the Oregon Legislature. We have now successfully added the requirement that all but the smallest employers provide that their employees earn at least 5 days paid sick leave per year. - Mary Wendy Roberts, former State Labor Commissioner of Oregon.

- Mary W, Portland, OR

City of Portland requires sick leave for restaurant workers. Nobody wants to come to your business if sick people are working!

- Louise G, Portland, OR

My truck driver husband does not get paid sick days from his employer, so when he is ill, he either works or loses that day’s pay.

- Lisa R, Portland, OR

For three years I worked full time without any benefits at all and now I have a job that allows for paid sick days. Everyone should be able to take time off work when they are sick and not have to suffer for it.

- Kara D, Corvallis, OR

On June 12, 2015, the Oregon Legislature passed a statewide bill to guarantee paid sick time. The law took effect on January 1, 2016 – a win-win for Oregon’s working families, businesses, and the state economy. Now it’s time to establish a national paid sick days standard.


Even though my husband is a union member he still gets no sick pay and also gets charged an occurrence when out sick! This is ridiculous!!!

- Rebecca H, Portland, OR

So sick and tired of dragging myself to work when I am weak and spewing virus-loaded gunk.

- Bobbee M, Portland, OR

A few years ago my son was written up for calling in sick with the flu and a doctors note and told it could be used against him to fire him. Why employers want contagious viruses spread in their work places is difficult to imagine, but the inhumane treatment workers receive needs to stop.

- Tricia N, Portland, OR

I owned a small business for over 30 years and I always provided paid sick leave. I feel it is the right thing to do for employees.

- Anita M, Beaverton, OR

My eldest son, Kade, is a brilliantly bright and cheerful little boy. His charming personality, love for adventure, and affectionate ways make people fall in love with him instantly. His bright blue eyes and long dark eyelashes are irresistible and his smile is absolutely contagious. He loves legos, Camaros, and the Rescue Bots, and when he grows up he wants to be a paramedic firefighter like his daddy. Kade has severe chronic asthma. He’s never been exposed to cigarette smoke and we do everything we can to minimize irritants in the home. He has been admitted to a local children’s hospital in Portland eight times in his short four years, with three of those visits being in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.

Closely working with his pediatrician and a visit to the pediatric pulmonologist revealed that his asthma is not triggered by allergies, exercise, or cold weather - his trigger is viral. VIRAL. Something as simple as the common cold can drop his oxygen saturation to 76% and mean the better part of a week in the hospital with respiratory therapy coming in every two hours to medicate him. Kade uses a daily low-steroid inhaler to manage the severe symptoms, carries an emergency inhaler at all times, and we have been granted a five day supply of an oral steroid medication as a last line of defense if we feel he is starting to slip. Unfortunately, viruses are just a part of life and I cannot shield him from every microscopic bug. And sure he can handle nearly 2/3 of his colds without issue, but the 1/3 that cause him respiratory distress mean that I must miss work.

I have lost two jobs due to Kade’s frequent asthma episodes - either from him being ill or from the daycare not feeling comfortable with caring for his symptoms. I cannot count the times I’ve had a disciplinary meeting with supervisors for my excessive absences. If I knew that paid sick leave was available to me, I would not have the added stress of worrying about my finances crumbling further due to missed work every time I heard Kade wheeze. The massive medical debt would be a bit less intimidating if I knew that while I was in the hospital I was still maintaining a con-
sistent wage. Please, I implore you, for my family and hundreds of thousands of others - PLEASE grant paid sick leave!

– Rachel P, Wilsonville, OR

My husband has been the sole provider for our family since 2008. He got pneumonia and had to be off work for a week, without sick pay, vacation, or any other security. It sent our family in a downward spiral and we are one of the families who lost their home in the market crash. If he had paid sick days, our family may not have lost our home.

– Laura, Albany, OR

Where I work, we only get paid sick days after being out for three days, with a doctor’s note stating that we were un-fit for work. Consequently, most of my colleagues came to work sick, passing around whatever virus or bacterial infection that they have. But we won paid sick days in Portland! Five days per year; some small businesses are exempt, but most are covered. The ordinance now supersedes the sick day policies in our contract; people can call in sick the first day, and be paid for it. It’s a huge victory for Portland workers.

– Avery L, Portland, OR

When my children and/or husband were sick, and I had no choice but to take time off work to care for them, our savings were quickly gone. Without sick pay, bills didn’t get payed, groceries and medicines didn’t get bought. Many people are in a worse position with no savings at all. There is a big drag on the economy in such situations, not to mention the health and wellbeing of the families who must deal with loss of wages. With sick pay, people would be back on the job quicker because financial needs are met. And employers would find that employees would be more productive.

– Dolores W, Portland, OR

**Pennsylvania**

My poor sister Linda worked all through her cancer treatments, even as her employer, Jefferson Hospital, gave her a hard time over even using her lunch hour for chemo treatments - she died at 54 years old.

– Gary K, Buena Vista, PA

I currently have paid sick leave, but I feel everyone should have it. I got burned at work once and was out 3 weeks. At the time I was feeding 5 kids and without my paid sick leave they wouldn’t have been able to eat. Think about that and support paid sick leave!

– Thomas R, Philadelphia, PA

My 62 y/o mother does not get any sick days despite many years of service to her company. If she takes off, she doesn’t get paid so as a widow, she can’t afford to take off when she gets sick, and that is very bad when you work in the health care industry.

– Trisha D, Swarthmore, PA

My daughter-in-law is a teacher, and she has asthma--she cannot avoid kids who come to school sick, but every respiratory illness is a serious threat to her health. Please support paid sick days, which would allow parents to keep sick children home from school!

– Nancy N, Sewickley, PA

Some people get the idea that if people were granted paid sick days, then they’d misuse them. I’ll tell you what, my husband usually has to “use them or lose them” by the end of the year. Maybe we could slow down the spread of potentially dangerous illnesses if the greater majority of workers were granted sick days. Did we think of that? Maybe we’d be less sick less often if we had time to recover from the last immune system compromising illness. And maybe, people would stop unnecessarily dying from illnesses. People we loved, and people that have touched our lives.

– Tiffany M, Coraopolis, PA

I was one of those people that had no sick time. I went to work running fevers and feeling terrible. When my daughter was sick, I would lose a days pay if she needed the doctor. Every working person deserves sick time.

– Stephanie M, Dalton, PA

I have no paid sick days at my job. When I should call off because my children are sick, I usually end up going to work because I can’t afford to miss a day.

– Sherry S, New Castle, PA

The Pennsylvania Federation of Business & Professional Women has long supported the paid sick days. Our membership across the Commonwealth has supported paid sick leave for many years. Swift action is absolutely necessary.

– Lilly G, Mehoopany, PA

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**A Study of Restaurant Industry Practices Found That Implementing Better Workplace Practices Including Paid Sick Days Can Reduce Turnover by 50%**

Reducing turnover is cost effective: companies typically pay about one-fifth of an employee’s salary to replace that employee.


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**Pennsylvania**

My dear sister Linda worked all through her cancer treatments, even as her employer, Jefferson Hospital, gave her a hard time over even using her lunch hour for chemo treatments - she died at 54 years old.
If we’re honestly looking to grow our economy... if we are looking to raise a generation of children to develop into good citizens ... if we are looking to support families to maintain a stable and lawful home, neighborhood and country, then providing adequate sick pay for all workers is an absolute necessity. And also, it’s the right thing to do!

– Naomi H, Blue Bell, PA

As a father who had to take time off when our son was very sick, I know what many people today must go through. I am asking you to support paid sick days to give people the time they need for unplanned problems and/or childbirth.

– John L, Pequea, PA

I am struggling with this. Three of my kids just had the flu & both my husband & I do not have time to take off. It is not right.

– Kim O, Kennett Square, PA

I know personally that it is gut wounding to be sick enough to be unable to go to work, and knowing that my paycheck will be reduced and make everything, including medicine even harder to afford.

– Annette B, Presto, PA

My husband works in the food industry. If he doesn’t go to work, he doesn’t get paid. Not only that, but there is no contingency plan if workers get sick...they have to come in. And they come in sick all the time. Think about a person with norovirus making your salad the next time you go out, because they can’t take a day off work. Think about the person with the flu, cleaning your hotel room or putting your groceries in a bag. These are all jobs you can’t take off sick for.

– Liz L, Greenfield Township, PA

I am retired but when I worked for the City of Philadelphia, I was fortunate not only to have many paid sick days per year but also family sick days. It is a good feeling to know that you can take time off from work if you or a loved one is ill without worrying about it affecting your financial security. I was always aware that other people I know did not have this benefit and counted myself lucky that I did. However, it shouldn’t be that someone is lucky enough to land a job where they have the benefit of paid sick days. It should be a right of all workers in the United States of America.

– Nancy G, Philadelphia, PA

Eight years ago, I worked as an account manager at an independent book store. When I started there, I had no benefits -- no health care, no sick time, no paid vacation. If I got sick, I stayed home and didn’t get paid. I was the sole support for my two children and myself. My ex-husband paid me $200/mo in child support -- when he felt like it. I had to pay for the children’s CHIP health care ($90/mo) and I didn’t qualify for Adult Basic because, believe it or not, that $200/mo in child support put me over the limit by $200/year.

So, there I am, with no safety net at all. I lived in fear of one of the children getting sick or worse -- me getting sick. Worrying about it every winter, every time one of the children complained about not feeling well, every time I felt a tickle in my throat or felt feverish. It’s not a good way to live, under all that stress. I lived like that for three years -- no health insurance, no paid sick leave. Working while sick only makes co-workers sick and customers ill, too. Staying home and not worrying about whether it will mean I can’t pay bills is not a good way to live. I now have a better paying job with good benefits and it’s a relief to know that if I get sick or one of the children gets sick, I can take the necessary time off to take care until better health returns.

– Laura S, Pittsburgh, PA

I do not have paid sick days. I have worked as a substitute instructional assistant for Lower Merion School District for 15 1/2 years. I am only paid for days worked and get no benefits. This past year I was rear-ended in December, and missed 7 days of work due to pain and/or dizziness from pain meds. Then I fell and suffered a concussion in February, spent two days in the hospital, and missed 5 days of work. After I went back to work, I picked up what they were calling “the three week virus”, and missed more days while fighting off the virus. Having no paid sick days really put me in a hole. I now have shut-off notices for my gas service and my water service. What they call “temporary workers” like me are the largest growing segment of workers. We really need laws to give us some employee benefits!

– Marie F, Philadelphia, PA

On February 12, 2015, the Philadelphia City Council voted to guarantee paid sick time for workers in the city to care for personal or family health needs. Under Philadelphia’s paid sick time law, workers in businesses with 10 or more employees are able to earn and use up to 40 hours of paid sick time a year. Workers in smaller businesses are able to earn and use up to 40 hours of job-protected unpaid sick time a year.

As a pediatrician, I see first hand how some parents struggle to get kids to the doctor's office for necessary appointments. Also I see them struggling with their own health sometimes too, putting it aside to care for their kids, holding off on seeing their doctor b/c they don't have enough sick days for themselves.

We need healthy parents to keep our kids healthy. Please give them paid sick days so they can afford to keep their family healthy!

- Joannie Y, Media, PA

My only daughter will be 32 in July... I became a single parent when she was 8. After working in Daycare for over 30 years with infants and toddlers, I am quite aware of the need for paid sick days - from both sides... as a parent and as a teacher! Thank you for listening!

- Marcy L, Philadelphia, PA

It is important. My wife needs sick days due to a chronic illness. Please support the American worker.

- John L, Bethlehem, PA

My company does not have paid sick days and I am disciplined if I call off without 24 hours notice. 3 sick days in a 6 month period leads to termination. After each sick day, a formal tally is stapled to my paycheck counting how many de-merit points I've earned year-to-date, along with a warning of the termination process.

I'm not a robot and I have young kids--a flu virus running through my family could cost me my job! At the same time, my company pushes insurance-based health initiatives like Biggest Loser competitions and biometric screenings. Cash bonuses go to employees who lose weight--but staying home with a stomach virus results in disciplinary action! How does this make sense? It's time for our country to step up and really take health seriously by mandating paid sick days for US workers.

- Jaci, Butler, PA

When I was working as a Social Worker at the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, I suffered a heart attack. I was only 38 years old and the sole support for my wife and 2 teenage children. Fortunately, our agency was staffed by a unionized workforce and our contract with the city provided paid sick leave. I was hospitalized for several days and then unable to work for weeks afterwards. Without paid sick leave, we might have lost our home. Everyone ought to have paid sick leave since anyone can get sick or have a family member get sick.

- David D, Philadelphia, PA

I don’t have any paid sick days. When I got pneumonia this fall, I was sick for 3 weeks and was contagious, so I could not come in to work. I am lucky that I could work from home, but I had to work through a debilitating illness in order to ensure I kept my job. This jeopardized my health greatly, because I could not rest to just get over my illness. When my son gets sick, I have to stay home with him, and I lose pay for that day.

- Allison S, Devon, PA

In 2012, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Thank god I had paid sick days to be able to take care of that. I was able to get treated and without paid sick days, I don’t think I would have been able to pay for my rent or buy food for my family. I can’t imagine what people without paid sick days would do. This is why I think everyone should have paid sick days.

- Anthony T, Chambersburg, PA

I work 3 part-time jobs. I am in this position due to a layoff from my former employer and the lack of full time work available. If my children or I are sick, I have to lose income and struggle to pay bills, buy food, clothing and keep my mortgage afloat. Please help!

- Jennifer B, Tiverton, RI

In December, my husband had a heart attack, and got a pace maker, all w/ no health insurance. I am disabled, but can work a small job, for 5 hrs. a week. My husband is out of work, we’re living on the savings we have left. Enough said.

- Candace G, Cranston, RI

A few months ago I was unexpectedly hospitalized for the first time with an intestinal blockage. I missed 2 days of work and had significant copays and deductible costs. If I had lost income from work for those 2 days on top of the unexpected expenses, I would not have been able to cover my mortgage this month.

- Marc C, East Providence, RI

Please help RI workers and their families by supporting paid sick days. A few paid sick days may not sound like much to those who earn high income, but many moderate and low income people will not have to make the hard choice of either going to work sick or not being able to pay their monthly bills!

- Dora Arsenault, Warwick, RI

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

- Katya G, Providence, RI

When I had surgery and didn’t have any paid sick days, it meant that I didn’t have any money for the first few days afterward, when I was incapable of working.

- Mario M, Riverside, RI

RHODE ISLAND

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On September 19, 2017, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed paid sick days, guaranteeing roughly 90% of the state’s workforce the opportunity to earn sick and safe time.

As an RN, a Mother of two children, and a citizen of USA, I urge action on this very important issue!!

– Carol T, Wakefield, RI

A top-notch employee at a chain restaurant I patronize weekly was recently fired because she had to take off too many days to care for a child with a serious, chronic illness. Her manager didn’t want to let her go and felt terrible about it. Now, she has had to hire someone to replace the first employee and she has to hope that the new employee will be able to get up to speed quickly, and that she won’t quit, forcing the manager to start the whole process over again.

– Kristin C, North Kingstown, RI

SOUTH CAROLINA

My daughter is an RN in a hospital in North Carolina. Because her 3 year old daughter has epilepsy, and an inoperable brain lesion, she cannot afford to get private health insurance and to stay at home with her and her 1 year old brother who are constantly sick from being in day care with so many other sick children whose parents also work in the hospital and cannot take paid sick leave. They rarely are well and continue to have to go to “school” while sick! This is not right!

– Susan J, Greenwood, SC

Paid sick time should be a right. My daughter has a bakery with only 2 employees but she can afford to let them accrue sick time. There really is not any excuse not to provide this benefit to full time employees.

– Ellen T, Greer, SC

I used to work in low-wage-no-sick-day childcare center and for an entire winter, I exposed every child, every parent and all of my co-workers to a respiratory illness with uncontrollable coughing. Shockingly no one complained. I guess we all felt that we had “no choice”. Let’s change this!

– Jennifer, Lancaster, SC

This is such an important thing that must be done! Recently, a friend of mine had her baby. She had to use all of her sick time for maternity leave. (Another disgusting situation in our country!) Then came winter and she and her entire family became ill. She had to go to work (and the kids to daycare) with walking pneumonia, because she had no sick leave. THIS IS WRONG! Please get on board.

– Alexa B, Columbia, SC

I’m extremely fortunate to be a state employee that receives paid sick leave, especially b/c the business my husband works for does not offer it. However, it’s difficult to be the parent that always has to take off when the kids are sick. As a result, I generally go to work when I am sick so that I can save my sick days in anticipation of my children being ill. And because my husband does not receive paid sick leave, he generally goes to work sick and any time he has to be out due to illness, his paycheck is short, which is a real hardship when it’s time to pay bills. Despite having four college degrees between us, we live paycheck to paycheck and count on receiving full pay every payday.

– Martha B, Columbia, SC

Just yesterday my wife and I had a conversation with a server at On The Border. Her 3 year old son had a fall that required stitches and overnight hospitalization for observation. Yet she was NOT allowed to leave work to be with her son. That 3 year old had to deal with the trauma in the care of another without his mother. Unbelievable!

– Ronald R, Sioux Falls, SD

TENNESSEE

I am a new mom and because my baby was sick or day care was closed due to weather, I have been told that if I continue calling out or leaving work early or coming in late, I will be placed into some type of disciplinary action. It is becoming stressful for me as a new mom being able to take care of my child. And because of my economical situation I cannot afford losing my job.

– Trice M, Cordova, TN

While I was in graduate school, I worked at a preschool for minimum wage. When I wasn’t feeling well (which was frequent given working with young children), I didn’t feel I could stay home because I needed the money. This prolonged and spread illness much longer than necessary. Please support paid sick days for those who work with young children.

– Margrethe F, Memphis, TN

I used to do research work in public offices. It was not pleasant when people would come in with their children, and say “oh, he’s out of school today because he’s sick.”

– Mary B, Brentwood, TN

I have CHF, asthma, and IBS. I also have 4 kids. I work as a Security Guard and have no sick days! Please help us.

– Adzie C, Nashville, TN

I don’t want sick waiters to bring me my food or nurses’ aides to come in and infect my elderly relatives because they can’t afford to take the day off to get well. Don’t be penny wise and pound foolish. It’s common sense. Support paid sick days!

– Kelly G, Kissimmee, TN

My son-in-law cannot afford to be sick because he does not get paid when he doesn’t work! This causes the family to be under pressure of financial crisis every time he gets sick. Please help him!

– Beverly M, Chattanooga, TN

I was involved in an auto accident with three co-workers on our way to lunch. The car rolled over three times and landed on the roof. I sustained a concussion, neck & back injuries as well as other minor injuries. I had both physical & speech therapy three times per week for about 4 months. Upon returning to work, I was forced to catch up on my missed work while training on a computer program located down very steep inclined stairs. All of which, compromised decreasing swelling of my brain. My doctor recommended that I work from home because the lights & noise caused severe headaches. My requests were denied. I was eventually fired after taking a week off (using my earned days off) to rest & recover.

– Sheri P, Nashville, TN

TEXAS

My husband gets no paid sick days. Every time he is out sick, we lose money.

– Allison K, Round Rock, TX

I’m a physician and see patients every day who return to work before they should because they have no sick days at work. They are often contagious and get others sick as well. We need to help these workers care for themselves and their families.

– Kristin B, Austin, TX

I would be homeless if I did not have paid sick days. I suspect many homeless people would not be homeless had they also had some form of paid leave. In order to have a civil society, we must first be civil - paid sick days are just one part of how that can be a reality for all working Americans.

– Vanessa M, Austin, TX

When my teenage daughter was sick with cancer, a friend of her younger brother’s was sent to school with pneumonia because his mother was afraid she’d lose her job if she took time off to care for her child. Well, my son and husband ended up with pneumonia and my daughter? 6 days in the hospital with an “unspecified respiratory infection,” an illness that had her gravely ill could have killed her in her weakened state. Had this kid’s mother felt comfortable taking off work, that need not have happened.

– Linda R, Mansfield, TX

Especially now with illnesses like the enterovirus and the sudden paralyzing of children’s limbs, parents are facing life and death decisions for the child while in the hospital. How can you make a decent decision on whether your child needs hospitalization, or how very ill your hospitalized child is when you can’t be there? Please vote for the little humanity we can still provide. Side with decency please!

– Ali Z, Medina, TX

I spent several years in my 20s and early 30s working at jobs without insurance and without paid sick leave. Illness of any kind was a serious crisis.

– Bill C, Austin, TX

My partner works as a scaffold builder and risks his life everyday to help build important things for our city. He never gets a paid day off -- he works so hard and deserves a paid sick day without worrying about how the bills will get paid. Sometimes there isn’t any work and we stress all the time about how things will get paid.

– Christina T, Baytown, TX

I’m a single mom and I have worked for the same company for 5 years now with no paid sick days and it makes it really hard when you do get sick or have sick kids. I hope paid sick days get approved for everyone like me that could really use it.

– Anita S, Longview, TX

Many workers have been classified as “part time help” which means I don’t earn any sick days, and I work in a hospital!

– Kathy L, Allen, TX

I worked for very low pay for a weekly newspaper, which I have since learned no longer offers its employees sick leave OR vacation time. This is appalling. No one should be allowed to treat their workers that way.

– Kathryn B, Austin, TX

I feel that paid sick days are important. I have two mothers -- my mom in law that is 87 and my mom that is 100. I have to use my PTO DAYS to take care of them, but I don’t have paid sick days.

– Geri F, Houston, TX

I have a friend who was told by his doctor he had to be off work to allow the staph infection on his feet to fully heal and to have stents put into his legs to improve blood flow. He is being forced to go back to work and forego the necessary surgeries on his legs.

– Mary S, Arlington, TX

I personally witnessed the outcome of no sick days when one person showed
up to my workplace with Influenza. All but 2 people in a 45 person department were out sick with it. Our employer ended up giving us paid sick days not long after this.

— Jo L, Garland, TX

I have felt the fall-out of parents who can’t afford to keep their kids at home when they are sick, as a teacher, as a colleague/friend, and as the parent of an elementary-school-aged child. I’ve had students come to class with high fevers, chills, body aches, vomiting, and whooping cough, who told me they couldn’t go home because their parents had to work. I’ve seen an administrator get fired for taking too much time caring 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 leave, the foundational structures of our country – families, schools, our medical system, our economy – are undermined, negatively impacting our entire society.

— Danita M, Austin, TX

I am a single mom and college student with 2 part time jobs. When I get sick or my daughter gets sick my household is financially threatened.

— Romona B, Austin, TX

Paid sick leave is not just good for employees. It benefits the public who will not have to be exposed to every illness and employers who will not have all employees sick and some under severe stress over their health, their children’s health, their financial well-being, and the security of their jobs. As a business owner, I am fully aware that it is much more efficient to have a healthy workforce than an ailing one and to temporarily fill in for an absent worker than to hire and train a new one.

— Elizabeth B, Jarrell, TX

In June of 2014, I was rushed to the hospital for emergency surgery when one of my fallopian tubes began to rupture due to an ectopic pregnancy. During my physical recovery, I was unable to work for nearly 2 weeks. At the time, my income accounted for approximately two-thirds of our family’s total monthly income. The loss of wages, combined with medical bills, nearly cost us our home when we fell behind on our mortgage as a result. Dealing with the financial stress while recovering from my surgery physically, in addition to grieving the loss of our child, almost resulted in my husband and I separating for several months and close to divorcing. No family should have to suffer from a financial burden simply because a company doesn’t want to pay for sick days for their employees.

— Deanne R, Houston, TX

My health is not good, and I could not make it financially if I did not have paid sick days.

— Whitney C, Hawley, TX

I have been fortunate. I have always had both health insurance and good health/paid sick days and have never had to go to work while sick. But just because it did not happen to me does not mean it is not a problem. I know of an older woman, who wanted to get ahead by enrolling in college courses and working on the side. She had a bad case of asthma, was hospitalized, missed days of work and got into debt. She got a loan from one of those payday lenders, could not pay the loan, wrote a bad check and was jailed. Now she has a record and cannot get a job. This is just horrible.

— Odilia L, Austin, TX

My health is not good, and I could not make it financially if I did not have paid sick days.

— Sharon G, Round Rock, TX

During my 30 plus years of working as a Registered Nurse, I was repeatedly discouraged from taking sick days for myself, let alone to care for a child. Working
in a hospital, I spread my germs around to co-workers as well as our patients. We would continue to re-infect each other, so that a bout of the flu could hang around for months. We were looked down upon by management for properly caring for our children.

– Chris McGatha, Pflugerville, TX

I was forced to go to work 3 days after major surgery, or I would not have been paid. The bills will not wait, thus I had to return to work 6 weeks earlier then my surgeon recommended. It was very tiring and the healing process took a lot longer, but what is one to do?

– Ita B, San Antonio, TX

UTAH

We need to take care of our workers and their families. This builds stability and loyalty within a company. And I know, I’m a CEO and I fully support paid sick days legislation.

– Lisa M, Salt Lake City, UT

Working parents deserve paid sick leave in order to not leave their children home alone when they are ill. As a single parent myself I know it is hard to leave a child home alone. Having to work or stay home with no pay can be dangerous for the child. Not to mention losing a whole day’s pay. Parents should never have to leave a child alone when they are sick. Please prioritize paid sick days.

– Alice C, Cedar Valley, UT

I worked for the State of Utah for about 33 years and was fortunate to have 12 days per year of paid sick leave. If I didn’t need all of those days, I was allowed to let it accrue from year to year. We were also allowed to donate some of our leave time to another employee if it was needed for a long term illness. We were even allowed to take leave time for an hour or two at a time if it was needed for an appointment with a doctor or dentist. In addition, we were allowed to use our sick leave if we needed to be with a family member who was sick. I think it is obvious that this benefits both the employee, the employer, and the public who is being served.

– Virginia G, Provo, UT

In February 2016, Vermont passed a statewide paid sick days bill, requiring employers to provide workers (who work more than 18 hours per week) with three paid sick days for the first two years that the law is in effect and five days thereafter. Now it’s time to establish a national paid sick days standard.


Today I overheard my boss wonder why a new female employee (single mother) couldn’t have given more notice or found a back up after she called in half an hour before work. Her kid threw up in the car on the way to the back up babysitter. And my boss stated that if it happened again, she would be fired.

I was appalled. I am quitting because of similar treatment. My company has no sick days, time off is given at the manager’s discretion. That is abysmal. And they wonder why they have high turnover.

– Carrie M, Bountiful, UT

I am an employer and I think paid sick days make for better employees. I believe employers should at the LEAST offer paid sick days.

– Adrian VM, Bountiful, UT

VERMONT

No one working full time or part time should have to make the decision to go to their place of employment ill - it’s not fair to all involved. I’ve had to make that choice; I would have loved to be able to stay home to recover and know I would not lose my employment. Irony is that a co-worker passed the severe cold to me. Let’s be smart about our health and support paid sick days.

– Diane C, Essex Junction, VT

Being self-employed as a psychotherapist, I both work with individuals challenged by the absence of paid sick days and experience it personally. The overarching sense of angst and worry about this issue is constant. Please, in keeping with Vermont’s reputation as a forward moving state, take this humane and compassionate step. Thank you.

– Elizabeth L, Winooski, VT

Since I retired from being an elementary school librarian, I have had almost no respiratory illnesses. Quite a change from three or more episodes most school years. Sick families create risks for everyone.

I have a 93 year old Mother who is frail, and those of us who care for her 24/7 can’t do so when we ourselves are ill. The ripple effects boggle the mind.

– Linda H, Guilford, VT

VIRGINIA

My employer provides paid sick days and it’s a world of a difference. Being able to stay home with a sick little one not only reduces the stress in the whole family, increases loyalty and productivity in the work place but it is the fair thing to do. I have seen the problems my working parent friends who don’t have this benefit have to deal with, taking vacation or unpaid days that stresses their families in all aspects.

– Margarita F, Charlottesville, VA

I once held a job with no sick leave. I had to man a customer service counter with a fever and flu symptoms because I could not trade shifts with a co-worker. It was just too cruel of a work environment.

– Sara B, Blacksburg, VA
As a former HR professional, I can say from experience that one’s employees stay healthier when sick employees can choose to stay home when ill and not suffer financially. That helps the bottom line of any business, no matter the number of total employees.

– Catherine R, Manassas, VA

If a business can’t afford to give employees paid sick and vacation days they shouldn’t be in business. This should be a minimum standard. My husband and I have a business where this is the norm. I wouldn’t shortchange employees with anything less.

– Janet M, North Tazewell, VA

As a part-time employee, I have trouble meeting my mortgage payments when I have to miss work for illness. I have gone to work with colds in a senior center where I probably have infected at-risk seniors with colds because I couldn’t afford to miss a day of work.

– Amy C, Alexandria, VA

I was lucky enough to work for a company that provided a reasonable number of paid sick days. It was such a relief when I or one of my kids got sick. And when I got sick, often one day of rest early on, took care of it. Also, I did not endanger my co-workers by spreading my germs around the workplace.

– Gail H, Cross Junction, VA

As a pediatrician, I see first hand the struggle it is for working parents to take care of their sick children and themselves and still be in a steady job. They need help maintaining a healthy balance.

– Bina F, Williamsburg, VA

I just left a job after six years with zero sick pay. When I started there, I had two elementary-age children (read: so many germs). What did that do for me? Well I couldn’t pay all my bills, grocery money didn’t exist, couldn’t buy shoes for my kids. Shall I go on? One simple reason...I LOST money from my paycheck when someone was sick. And it is HORRIBLE! The employer I am blessed to work for now has plenty of sick days, among many more fabulous benefits.

– Tara N, Williamsburg, VA

It’s easy for those of us with paid sick leave to overlook this hugely important issue. But it affects all of us and is the human thing to do. I cannot imagine working for a company that doesn’t provide sick leave—it’s an impossible choice and certainly doesn’t make an individual more productive coming in on days they are sick, or when they need to be home with their sick child.

– Laura S, Arlington, VA

I am lucky to work for a company where you don’t even have to earn paid sick days, you just take them when you need to and yes they are paid. And let me tell you it’s one of the largest telecommunication companies out there. I appreciate the fact that I’m not going to go to the office and get sick because my coworker couldn’t stay home. I also appreciate that I can stay home with my sick child. This should be a given in this country.

– Jennifer M, Ashburn, VA

As a working mom, I know how important it is to have paid sick days. My daughter was sick on Friday—and it was a relief to be able to stay at home with her without losing pay. I feel for all of the parents who have to make that difficult decision of losing critical income or staying home when they or a child is sick.

– Karen M, Alexandria, VA

My daughter was born with a cleft lip and palate. She had her first surgery at 3 months old and her second at 6 months. Additionally, she had another surgery this past year when she was 6 years old. During this time, both my husband and I were lucky enough to have paid time off to spend with our daughter during this critical time. Everyone should have that right.

– Emily K, Manassas, VA

WASHINGTON

Sick kids require families to do a lot of juggling, especially when both parents work. Knowing we have the safety net of sick days to fall back on if needed makes a big difference.

– Hilary P, Bellingham, WA

I was able to stay with both sons when they were hospitalized, one at six weeks of age for 10 days, and the other at age 19 for 10 days. Not all the time I missed from work was covered, but part of it was and I had a job to return to. When I was with my second son at Children’s Hospital in Seattle, I witnessed mothers and fathers tortured by the need to leave their babies and children in the hospital with no family daily. They had to work to pay the bills and/or keep their insurance. It was absolutely heart wrenching for everyone. I have worked in a school district and preschools, where children are left sick because there are no options. Not only does this put emotional and physical stress on the families, but exposes other children to illnesses. Children stay sicker longer for lack of proper nurturing by a parent in a home environment. Please recognize the positive and necessary impact that paid sick days would make on families and communities. You were elected because people trust you to do the right thing. Family first is always right.

– Tamara L, Mukilteo, WA

I am a preschool teacher with part time jobs in three other church nurseries. I have three children and get a grand total of two paid sick days a year. This is not enough.

– Jenna, Federal Way, WA

I administered welfare programs for 25 years. Welfare reform helped get many people off long term assistance, but did not solve this critical issue. Please support paid sick days. Thank you.

– Susan S, Puyallup, WA

As a nurse, I have had the luxury of paid sick leave throughout 2 pregnancies, 1 surgery, and a fractured leg. It saved us financially...I went back to work and minimally disrupted our family during my leave.

– Marley K, Ferndale, WA

I work in Early Childhood Education and parents who have paid sick leave can stay home to get better themselves or care for sick family members. That in turn helps keep the whole community more healthy!

– Gayle H, Vancouver, WA

My cousin lost his job because, as a single father of three working construction, he missed too many days of work to care for his kids.

– Julie D, Greenbank, WA
Despite the fact that I have two masters degrees, permanent state certification, and 15 years of teaching experience, I cannot find more than a per diem job in a public school on Long Island.

To make matters worse, if one of my children falls ill, I have to stay home with them. We cannot afford for my husband, who has a chronic, life-threatening condition, to take off work because he may need those days for when he is sick. If I don’t work that day, I don’t get paid at all. Mothers should be given paid sick days to take care of the next generation.

- Robert B, Fircrest, WA

Being a single mother, there were many days I could only work heavily dosed with Dayquil. I could not afford a short check with no paid sick leave and then not have enough money for either rent or food. No matter how sick, you had to drag yourself to work and pray the weekend is soon so you can get better. The poor work damn hard. The rich have no idea.

- Rebecca N, Bellevue, WA

Both of my children have a seizure disorder, plus frequent ear infections (which often trigger more seizures). I’ve lost more jobs than I can count.

Also, when I would apply for other positions in the School District, I would be told that they could not offer me an interview. I am also losing caregiving assignments, still to this day, 22 years later.

- Diane R, Edmonds, WA

Both my husband and I have had to work to make ends meet and give our son a “leg up” that we never had. Having paid sick days meant we could meet our budget needs and keep the bills paid. Shouldn’t everyone have that benefit??? If not, let’s take it away from Congress, too.

- Gigi S, Port Townsend, WA

As a teacher, I had paid sick leave all my life. I was so healthy, that I probably used 10-15 sick days in my 41-year career. This system is part of the reason I never worried about my health issues, and it is obviously some of the reason I am still healthy.

- Robert B, Fircrest, WA

Contrary to stereotypes, LGBTQ-headed families experience poverty at a higher rate than the general public. Single LGBTQ adults raising children are three times more likely to live near the poverty threshold, while married or partnered LGBTQ individuals raising children are twice as likely.

For these families, taking the day off of work without pay can mean putting their paycheck, job, and families’ economic security at risk.

- Dara U, Port Washington, WA

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- Robert B, Fircrest, WA

There were times in my work career that I had no paid sick leave. This was a real financial hardship when I had my foot operated on. Others should not have to worry about paying bills because they are sick.

- Sarah Y, Gig Harbor, WA

I am a PRESCHOOL teacher and I don’t get paid sick days!!! (My boss told me to bring a bucket to puke in if I’m sick!)

- Ellen Z, Olympia, WA

I am a healthcare worker, and ironically, have no paid sick leave. So I work hard to stay well, but sometimes find myself evaluating just HOW sick I am, and what risk I might pose to my patients. I try to make the best decision possible, and wish that I had the opportunity to have an easier decision, and just stay home if I show any signs of illness.

- Shelley K, Kirkland WA

I had surgery that kept me out of the workplace for a long time. My co-workers transferred sick leave to me. It made an easier decision, and just stay home if I show any signs of illness.

- Shelley K, Kirkland WA

I had surgery that kept me out of the workplace for a long time. My co-workers transferred sick leave to me. It made all the difference. I am eternally grateful.

- Nadine L, Seattle, WA

As a family physician for 30 years, I have personally (through my own flu illnesses) and professionally experienced the threat of job termination due to contagious illnesses. I always advocated for my patients however today sometimes the health provider is dinged for getting ill too!

- Susan D, Seattle, WA

Last year my newborn son was hospitalized for 2 months with a seizure disorder. We did not know whether he would live or not. Because my wife does not have sick days she still had to work while he went through a NICU hospitalization. It’s about time we keep up with the civilized world and have family leave and sick leave laws.

- Luis R, Seattle, WA

Working with cancer patients is often times one of the most difficult positions when you yourself are sick. Usually you’re short staffed as it is, and everybody is so concerned about taking care of the patients... This leads to many people coming into work sick, even with fever, because there’s nobody to relieve them that can adequately perform the job.

This is a horrible problem, as sick people who need care are already compromised immunologically and shouldn’t have to risk exposure to communicable diseases when battling much larger systemic and potentially deadly health issues.

- Michelle S, Spokane, WA

When my infant daughter was hospitalized with RSV, my husband was able to take advantage of paid sick days from his employer.

My daughter’s daddy was able to be with her in the hospital, where he should be. Millions of Americans lack the ability to care for themselves and their loved ones this way. It isn’t right! Please act now.

- Gwendolyn W, Seattle, WA
One year after the implementation of Seattle’s paid sick days law, 70% of Seattle employers said they experienced no administrative difficulties with implementation and 70% of employers said they support the law. Main Street Alliance found no evidence that the law had a negative effect on the economy.

We are “allowed” to call in sick only if we have “PTO” built up. I was okay with that, but my employer has now set a limit to sick days, which, if surpassed, can lead to termination. The scarier part is that I work in an emergency department where we treat sick people every day without any warning of their conditions. Even though we are exposed on a daily basis to the most powerful bacteria, viruses & other microbials, we are expected to have less than 5 sick days/year. Now, if we surpass those 5 days, we may lose our jobs.

– Adam O, Spokane, WA

When I was in my 20s, my husband was fired from his job at Bellingham Cold Storage for going to a dentist appointment -- even though he told the interviewer about the appointment during his hiring interview. The appointment was hard to get and had been made months beforehand.

– Jody S, Edmonds, WA

As a retired critical care nurse, I have seen the first hand the cost of not having paid sick days. It impacts employers financially, impacts families who must stay home financially, and encourages people to return to work, and school too soon thus spreading the disease. There is a big domino effect. Stop this domino effect.

– Veletta W, Vancouver, WA

I work for a government contracting company and I earn sick pay, however I am not able to use any of it until after I have been with my company for 1 year. I have 3 young children that get sick. My husband is in the Army and cannot miss very many days to take care of sick children so I have to. When I miss a day, I lose out on pay, as I can’t use the sick days that I have already accumulated over the past 5 months.

– Hope P, Yelm, WA

As a physician working in a community clinic, I see people every day who have delayed care due to financial strain. Earned paid sick days are critical not only for the families who are ill, but for their communities, from a public health perspective.

– Lora S, Bellingham, WA

I’m a mother of four! I had to give up my teaching job because I used up all my sick leave and couldn’t afford to miss work without pay!

– Josie, Bellevue, WA

As a Family Home Child Care Provider, I don’t have sick days nor do the families have alternative care if I am ill: this is not right.

All families should have the access to paid sick days as well as family home child care providers, if and when family home child care providers are ill, the families they service should also get sick day pay! Think about it.

– Marion H, Port Angeles, WA

As an RN and a mom, I have seen the effects of children who are being sent to school sick, but medicated to hide the symptoms because their parents don’t have any paid sick days.

– Deborah M, Edgewood, WA

WEST VIRGINIA

As a lifelong blue collar worker with paid sick days, I understand the importance of this benefit.

– Francis S, Middlebourne, WV

I had my groceries checked out and packaged the other day by a very sick woman with walking pneumonia. It’s unconscionable.

– Merri M, Greenville, WV

Just heard the statistic that 40% of our food workers go to work sick. They handle our food! They go to work sick because they don’t get paid sick days and they can be fired. Change this!!

– Debbie R, Charles Town, WV

I have had hot deep fryer grease spatter my face and eyes, and have been denied the right to leave my underpaid cook/waitress/dishwasher job. Talk about a living hell in the restaurant business.

– Cynthia H, Martinsburg, WV

WISCONSIN

We know that timely health care saves lives and prevents higher-cost medical treatment. It also saves on family pain and suffering from loss. Economically, paid sick days also save money in the work place due to less loss of work time. Therefore, sick leave is both morally and economically the right thing.

– Joe M, Amery, WI

Many times my parents were at the point of being at the very least docked, and at the worst fired for staying home with us if we got sick. Finally, my older brother had
to stay with me as I was too little to stay alone as a second grader. He was in 5th grade at the time. Our parents agonized over having to leave us. They called us on their breaks and hurried home from work as fast as they could get there. It was a nightmare worrying if they would lose their jobs. My brother and I did our best to cover up our illnesses and didn’t give in until we absolutely were too febrile or too listless to protest. This was in the 50s when we weren’t immunized against the flu, measles, mumps etc. One whole terrible winter we passed the flu back and forth between us, and then I got bronchitis. Our parents’ suffering was a terrible thing for us to witness. And not much has changed -- paid sick days are still out of reach for so many!

– Elizabeth R, Madison, WI

As a shopper, diner and co-worker, I’d like to know during “flu season” - and every season - that the people I come in contact with have the real option to stay home if they feel sick.

– Kim Robbins, Milwaukee, WI

Sick days help moms keep their jobs and kids secure.

– Donna M, Loganville, WI

For all 38 years my staff received sick days & personal days to use while employed.

– John S, Phillips, WI

I have been a CNA working in nursing homes full time and part time as a student for the past 23 years, 22 in non union shops, and one in a union shop. Unlike many waged workers, I have always had the privilege of paid sick days. However, a very bad practice has intruded into the healthcare world over the last decade. Those of us who have

paid sick days still have them but, we are penalized for using them. It works like this. Say I am sick with a contagious illness. I call in to work because I do not want to make my coworkers sick and I don’t want to give my illness to my immunocompromised patients. On the one hand, I am released from responsibility for working that day and I do get paid for it. On the other hand, they penalize me for using my sick day because there is no distinction between LEGITIMATE reasons for not showing up to work, and illegitimate reasons. I.e. I can even bring in a doctor’s note and that sick day will still be counted against me and if I rack up enough sick days – usually about 6 within 3 months – I will be disciplined and probably fired. Even though I was being conscientious and attempting not to infect my co-workers and immunocompromised patients with the my contagious illness.

– Theodore V, Madison, WI

I’ve had sick people waiting on me at restaurants. And I know it’s because they can’t afford to stay home - or might even be fired for staying home when they’re sick. This is a public health hazard.

– Lucy G, Madison, WI

As a self employed child care worker, I give myself paid sick days, but I feel terrible that some of my customers don’t have the same benefit. People pay for childcare even when their children are sick. Just like me they continue to have bills to pay even if they get sick. When they don’t have paid sick days they have to choose between working sick and/or dropping sick children off at childcare where they get other children sick, or not paying bills – shorting their family on food, heat, shelter,clothing, and ruining their credit score as the unpaid bills ac-

ure. When you are living one check to the next, there is no wiggle room. Why should people have to choose between a rock and a hard place when they work hard all day?

– Emily H, Pardeeville, WI

Paid sick days are essential to our economy. I had a friend who came to work every day, even when she was sick. Of course, everyone around her got sick. So it became a huge problem for all the employees and their families. Also, people who don’t feel well are less productive and can’t do their best. So it benefits the company to have sick days for their employees so that everyone feels well and germs don’t get spread around.

– Connie W, Milton, WI

I am an RN, and we are required to be at work, regardless of health. Not safe for patients or other workers. Of course, we don’t get breaks, either, although we get docked for them!

– Carla K, Tomah, WI

I was a single mother for many years and was threatened with being fired if I took a sick day for my child. And my son died of cancer at 47, and his widow is raising 5 children. She sinks or swims with or without paid sick days.

– Margaret L, Maiden Rock, WI

WYOMING

I currently do not get paid sick leave at work. Therefore, when I am sick, I go to work anyway. I risk infecting my co-workers and clients with whom I work. But I have no choice. As a result, the environment in which I work is extremely unhealthy. We have 250 staff and 150 clients. Sickness swirls around us all the time because everybody comes to work sick.

– Peggy M, Laramie, WY

I’m lucky to have sick days with my current job. I haven’t always had the luxury. Paid sick days help me be more productive by allowing me to take care of myself and my family without risking my job or getting a reduction on my paycheck. I want this for all families in America.

– Anna E, Casper, WY
MomsRising.org is an online and on-the-ground grassroots organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve economic security for all families in the United States.

MomsRising is working for paid family leave, flexible work options, affordable childcare, and for an end to the wage and hiring discrimination which penalizes so many others. MomsRising also advocates for better childhood nutrition, health care for all, toxic-free environments, and breastfeeding rights so that all children can have a healthy start.

Established in 2006, MomsRising and its members are organizing and speaking out to improve public policy and to change the national dialogue on issues that are critically important to America’s families. In 2013, Forbes.com named MomsRising's web site as one of the Top 100 Websites For Women for the fourth year in a row and Working Mother magazine included MomsRising on its “Best of the Net” list.