



The Healthy Families Act

Why We Need It:

- Many full-time workers have paid leave that they can use to take time off work when they are sick, or when they need to stay home to take care of a sick child or elderly relative. But not all workers have this essential benefit. **Almost half (47%) of full-time, private-sector workers have NO paid sick days.**
- The problem is particularly acute for working women, who are still predominantly responsible for meeting family caregiving needs. Almost half (49%) of working mothers report that they must miss work when a child is sick. And of these mothers, 49% do not get paid when they miss work to care for a sick child.
- Lower wage workers are hit hardest by the lack of a minimum paid leave standard. According to one Harvard Researcher, 76% of low-wage workers have no paid sick leave. Recent research from the Urban Institute shows that for working parents with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line, 41% have no paid leave of any kind (no paid sick leave, no paid vacation, no paid personal days).

Why It Makes Good Business Sense:

- A minimum amount of paid sick leave levels the playing field for covered employers and will have no impact on companies that already provide paid sick leave. According to a 2001 study published in the *Journal of Managerial Issues*, offering workers the option of taking time off when a family member is sick affects profits positively.
- The costs of losing an employee (advertising for, interviewing and training a replacement) can be far greater than the cost of providing short-term leave to retain existing employees.
- 44% of HR executives say that “presenteeism” - employees coming to work even though they are ill, which poses potential problems of contagion and lower productivity – is a problem in their companies. A recent Cornell study states that presenteeism costs \$180 billion annually in lost productivity and may cost employers more than absenteeism due to illness.

The Solution: The Healthy Families Act (Senator Kennedy/Rep. Rosa DeLauro)

- Requires all employers with at least 15 or more employees to provide 7 days of paid sick leave annually for full-time employees (working at least 30 hours per week or 1500 hours per year) and a pro-rata amount of leave for part-time employees working at least 20 hours/week or 1000 hours/year.
- Leave can be used to meet employee’s own medical needs or to allow employee to care for medical needs of a family member.
- Employers are encouraged to provide greater leave benefits, but are not required to modify existing paid leave policies if they meet minimum standards.