

At a Glance: The Healthy Families Act

More than 25 million Americans—or 20% of private-sector workers in the United States—have no paid sick time to care for themselves or their loved ones. Workers in low-wage jobs are the least likely to receive paid sick time; among the bottom 10% of wage earners in the U.S., nearly 60% lack even a single paid sick day.

The proposed Healthy Families Act would create a nationwide legal right for millions of working Americans to earn up to 7 days of paid sick time per year to use when they or their family members are ill or need medical care. This federal bill would build upon the successful track record of state and local paid sick time laws. Eighteen states (including D.C.) and dozens of local governments guarantee paid sick time, and these laws have benefitted workers, employers, and public health. However, access to paid sick time should not depend on where one works. All workers in the United States deserve access to paid sick time.

- **Paid sick time is good for workers and their families.** The Healthy Families Act (HFA) would protect the health and economic stability of working families, preventing workers from making the impossible choice between going to work sick (or sending a sick child to school) and risking their paycheck or their job.
- **Paid sick time is good for public health.** The HFA would curb the spread of infectious diseases like the flu by preventing workers from having to work when they are sick and infecting their coworkers and customers.
- **Paid sick time is good for businesses.** As the experience of cities and states that have already adopted these laws shows, paid sick time lowers employee turnover, increases productivity, and reduces healthcare costs, while leveling the playing field for employers.
- **Under the HFA, workers will accrue 1 hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked and be able to use up to 56 hours per year.** This paid sick time will begin accruing immediately and can be used 60 days after the start of employment.
- **Workers will be able to take time off when they are ill, injured, or receiving medical care.** This includes mental and physical illnesses, as well as time off for preventive care.
- **Workers can also use their time to care for family members, and family is broadly defined to reflect diverse family arrangements.** Under the HFA, workers will be able to use their time when their child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or other loved one to whom the worker has a similarly close relationship is ill, injured, or getting medical care.
- **Time off under the law can also be used for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors to address their safety, as well as their medical and legal needs.**
- **Employers can require reasonable notice and documentation.** For foreseeable absences like doctors' appointments, employers can require up to 7 days advance notice. For other absences, employers can require notice as soon as practicable. Documentation can be required when a worker takes paid sick time for more than 3 consecutive workdays.
- **Employers who already provide comparable paid time off will not be required to offer additional time.** If an employer provides at least the same amount of time required by the HFA and that time can be used for the same purposes and under the same conditions as time off under the HFA, that employer will not be required to provide more time off.