



Virginians For Paid Sick Leave

HB 5 (Convirs-Fowler), SB 372 (Carroll Foy) SB 199 (Favola)

Even before COVID-19, approximately 41 percent of private sector workers, 1.2 million people in Virginia, had no paid sick days or any paid time off (PTO). This creates a crisis for low-wage workers who must choose between taking a sick day for themselves or their children and getting paid.

Paid sick days will allow Virginians to care for their own health needs or those of a family member, including going to the doctor and getting tested for Coronavirus. It's time for Virginia to pass a paid sick days policy that keeps Virginians healthy, saves Virginia money and keeps our businesses open and safe.

Almost everyone benefits from a paid sick day standard, which is why 85 percent of voters say employers should offer paid sick days. Paid sick days help:

- **Workers and their families**

The essential workers during the Coronavirus crisis – the people who stock our shelves, provide health care, and care for children -- are facing serious challenges. When a worker takes 3.5 unpaid sick days, the average family loses a month's worth of groceries. Workers are forced to choose between feeding their families and caring for themselves or their children. Workers and their children need to be able to stay home when they are sick.

- **Public health**

A paid sick days policy will keep Virginians healthy, allowing workers to stay home when they're sick and prevent the spread of Coronavirus.

Low-wage workers (foodservice, personal health care, and childcare workers) are the least likely to have paid sick days. More than 80 percent of food industry workers and 75 percent of childcare workers have no paid sick days. More than half of all Norovirus outbreaks can be traced back to sick food service workers who were forced to choose between working sick and losing pay or their job.

- **Businesses**

Virginia needs a paid sick days policy to keep our economy running – to ensure businesses can safely reopen and stay open. Without paid sick days, workers go to work sick, infecting others and impacting productivity. Employers lose \$160 billion annually in productivity due to workers coming to work despite illness or injury. Providing paid sick days results in reduced turnover – saving businesses money. The restaurant industry, which has a high turnover rate, found that implementing workplace benefits can reduce turnover by 50 percent. And, a 2017 study by the Centers for Disease Control showed that paid sick days could save employers up to \$1.8 billion in reduced absences from flu-like illnesses.

- **Schools**

Parents who don't have paid sick days are more than twice as likely to send their children to school sick, than parents who have paid sick days. Sick children spread germs to children and teachers, and make it harder for schools to safely reopen.

- **Taxpayers**

Implementing paid sick days will save Virginia taxpayers money with lower health care costs. Workers who do not have paid sick days are 3 times as likely to go to the emergency room for treatment instead of to

the doctor's office. This leads to increased health care costs and strain on Virginia's community hospitals.