



the work and family legal center

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At a Glance: The Healthy Families Act

Today, 43 million Americans have no paid sick leave. The federal Healthy Families Act (S. 497/H.R. 932) would, for the first time, create a nationwide legal right for millions of working Americans to earn up to 7 days of paid time off per year to use when they or their family members are ill or need medical care.

- **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 among employers.
- **Workers whose employers have at least 15 employees will accrue 1 hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked and be able to use up to 56 hours per year.** Those with smaller employers will be able to accrue unpaid sick time at the same rate. This 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 relative 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 victims to address their safety, as well as their medical needs.**
- **Employers can require reasonable notice.** 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.
- **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.
- **All covered workers are protected when they take sick time.** Workers, including those eligible for unpaid time off, will be protected against retaliation, including job loss, when using their sick time.

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