



## EARNED SICK DAYS: KEY EVIDENCE

**#1. Earned sick days help strengthen the economy.** When working families have enough money in their pockets to cover the basics, the whole economy gains. Losing even a day's wages – or worse, a job - undermines families' ability to contribute to the economy and forces many to rely on public programs to keep their families afloat.

**Facts:**

- Nearly one quarter of adults in the US have **been fired or threatened with job loss** for taking time off to recover from illness or care for a sick loved one.
- For a low-income family without paid sick days, going just **3.5 days** without wages is the equivalent to losing a month's groceries.
- **Economists say** job retention policies like paid sick days help reduce unemployment and strengthen the economy.
- Economies in locations that have implemented paid sick days are doing well.
  - Connecticut enacted the first statewide paid sick days law, and the Department of Labor reports that since the passage of paid sick days in 2011, employment has grown in Connecticut's [Leisure and Hospitality](#) and [Education and Health Services](#) sectors, the two most impacted by the new law.
  - More than two in three businesses in San Francisco support their city's paid sick days law and **six in seven employers** report no negative impact on profitability. The city **experienced better job growth than 5 surrounding counties** without earned sick time.
  - In 2011, four years after San Francisco's sick time law was implemented, PriceWaterhouseCoopers ranked San Francisco as one of the top cities in the world to do business in. Even the chief lobbyist against the bill in San Francisco **told Businessweek** it's "the best public policy for the least cost. Do you want your server coughing over your food?"
- Small business owners cite **lack of sales as the greatest obstacle to recovery**. As many employers say, "Your workers are my customers. I need them not to lose a job or paycheck when they're sick so they can come to my shop."
- Productivity and profits have surged, while **wages have stagnated**, making it more difficult for working people to cover the basics.
- Presenteeism, (the cost of employees' lower productivity when working sick) **costs employers \$160 billion annually** – considerably more than the cost of absenteeism.
- Earned sick days can save \$1.1 billion in emergency room costs.

**#2. Earned sick days will strengthen families.** Every family wants what's best for their children, but without paid sick days, parents are often forced to choose between their family's financial stability and their children's health, and too many have no choice but to send a child to school sick or skip medical care.

This proposal would make it easier for workers to be good employees and good parents—and will let children lead healthier lives, be more successful in school and be better prepared for the future. Seniors will also benefit when adult children can afford to take them to the doctor or care for them during an illness.

**Facts:**

- Parents with paid sick days are **20 percent less likely to send a sick child to school**.
- When their parents are able to care for them at home, **sick children get better sooner** and reduce the risk of spreading the illness to their classmates.
- **One in four parents of a child with asthma (28 percent)** has missed one of their child's medical appointments because they could not get time off work.

**#3. Earned sick days protect public health and will make our country a safer, healthier place to live.**

Nearly 80 percent of food service workers in the United States have no paid sick days. When they go to work sick, they put the public health at risk. The Center for Disease Control found that more than ten million cases of foodborne illness each year are caused by sick restaurant workers contaminating food while they are at work. This proposal is good for public health by keeping sick employees from spreading their illness to the public.

**Facts:**

- Low-wage workers, including food service, personal health care and childcare workers, **are the least likely to have paid sick days**.
- Seventy-nine percent of food industry workers—who are especially likely to spread illness if they go to work sick—don't get paid sick days, according to a **Food Chain Workers Alliance study**. A **recent Centers for Disease Control study** found that more than half of all norovirus outbreaks can be traced back to sick food service workers.
- **Everyone's health is at risk when people are forced to go to work sick**. During the H1N1 epidemic, 7 million people caught the virus from co-workers who came to the job while sick.
- Paid sick days reduce the risk of on-the-job injury. In fact, according to a study by the National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety, workers who are able to earn paid sick days are **28% less likely to get injured on the job**.

**#4. Small businesses support earned sick days because it's good for their bottom line. The real opposition to this bill comes from lobbyists for multi-billion dollar corporations masking themselves as Mom-and-Pop shops.**

**Facts:**

- Earned sick days result in reduced turnover, which saves businesses money. Replacing workers can cost anywhere from 25 to 200 percent of a worker's annual compensation.
- Earned sick days help to decrease the productivity lost when employees work sick, which is estimated to cost our national economy **\$160 billion** annually – more than the cost of absenteeism.
- The \$600 billion restaurant industry and the partisan, **corporate front-group NFIB** are behind the opposition to earned sick days. The multi-million dollar chain restaurants are really driving the effort to keep their workers from receiving this modest benefit.
- These are the **same groups that opposed every workplace reform**, from fire escapes to ending child labor, establishing the minimum wage or unpaid family leave. Failure to pass this bill only strengthens the power of these groups, whose agenda is to enhance corporate control, weaken democracy and lower living standards for the majority of people.