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NEWS RELEASE

August 29, 2019

**Virginia Interfaith Center to Launch “Paid Sick Days for all Virginians” Campaign
Bring your tissues!**

Press conference - Thursday, Sept. 5, 11 a.m.

House Briefing Room, Pocahontas Building, 900 E. Main St., Richmond, VA

RICHMOND - It’s back to school week and children are excited to share their stories of summer fun, but parents and teachers know they will also be sharing their germs. Many parents cannot take a day off of work to care for a sick child, so they send their children to school sick, putting the whole community at risk. In Virginia, employers are not required to offer paid sick days or paid time off. That means more than 1.2 million workers (41 percent of private-sector workers) have no paid time off.

Faith leaders, legislators and teachers will be bringing boxes of tissues to a press conference on Thurs., Sept. 5th to help launch Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy’s “Paid Sick Days for All Virginians” campaign. This state-wide initiative aims to pass legislation requiring employers to provide five paid sick days to full-time workers. Speakers will include Senator Barbara Favola (D-31st) and Delegate Elizabeth Guzman (D-31st) who are filing bills for the upcoming 2020 General Assembly.

The Virginia Interfaith Center is leading the campaign to pass laws that require businesses with six or more employees to provide five paid sick days for full-time workers that workers can use to care for themselves or their family members. The law will also ensure that workers can use their sick days without fear of being fired or facing retribution. If we care about children’s success in school, we have to support policies that help parents at work.

Everyone benefits from a paid sick day standard. Children heal faster and don’t infect others when their parents can stay home with them. Workers also heal faster and don’t infect coworkers when they can stay home. Businesses benefit by decreased turnover and a reduction in the spread of illness. Diners benefit when food service workers stay home when they are sick (81 percent of food service workers have no paid sick days).

Children, parents, workers, businesses and the community all benefit from paid sick days. Eight-five percent of voters say employers should offer paid sick days and eleven states already have paid sick day requirements. It's time for Virginia to implement Paid Sick Days for all Virginians.

Kim Bobo, Executive Director of Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy said, "Paid sick days should be a public health priority. People of faith and goodwill call upon our state senators and delegates to enact legislation to protect our children and our workforce by mandating paid sick days. Virginia was recently ranked the number one state for business, let's make it the number one state for workers, families and children."

SPEAKERS

Kim Bobo, Executive Director, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

[Thomas Calhoun](#) – President, Norfolk, VA Federation of Teachers

[Senator Barbara Favola](#) (D-31st)

[Delegate Elizabeth Guzman](#) (D-31st)

Rabbi Gary Creditor and other faith leaders

RESOURCES/ARTICLES

Virginia Interfaith Center [fact sheet](#)

[Virginia Interfaith Center policy page](#)

[Op Ed in the Free Press](#) "Make Virginia No. 1 for Workers, Not Just Business," by Kim Bobo, Executive Director, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

[Virginia Public Radio](#), "This Year's Election Could Have Impacts on FMLA and Sick Leave in Virginia"

[Paid Sick Days: Busting Common Myths with Facts and Evidence](#)

[Paid Sick Days Can Help Contain Health Care Costs](#)

[Hard Work, Hard Lives](#)

[Paid Sick Days Improve Public Health](#)

PETITION

A paid sick days petition can be [signed online](#) or [downloaded](#). The signatures will be presented to legislators at the General Assembly in January.

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The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy advocates economic, racial, social, and environmental justice in Virginia's policies and practices through education, prayer, and action.

VICPP is a non-partisan coalition of more than 700 faith communities working for a more just society.