

# FACT SHEET



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## Educators: support paid sick days for all employees

**Problem:** Approximately 41 percent of private sector workers, **1.2 million workers in Virginia, have no paid sick days** or any paid time off (PTO). This creates a crisis for working parents who must choose between taking a sick day for themselves or their children and getting paid.

**Policy solution:** Create a paid sick day standard to require all employers with six or more employees to provide five paid sick days (40 hours) each year for full-time workers that could be used for themselves or to care for sick children. Part-time employees would accrue fewer paid sick hours based on hours worked. PTO policies qualify as paid sick days.

**Who benefits:** 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 will:

- **Lead to fewer school absences** - Children with parents who have paid sick days are 13 percent more likely to receive vaccinations and preventive care. This means that they will get sick less, miss less school, and do better long-term than kids whose parents do not have paid sick days and do not receive the care they need. High absence rates can affect a school's accreditation, which affects school funding.
  - When parents have no paid sick days, middle school and high school aged children are often needed to stay home with sick younger children. This harms both children who need to be in school or recovering with a parent or guardian.
- **Reduce the spread of disease** – Without paid sick days, parents are more likely to send a sick kid to school or day care. This puts the child's health, the health of other children, and teachers at risk. A study

found that staying home from school or work when infected by pandemic influenza reduces the number of people impacted from anywhere between 15 to 34 percent.

- **Encourage faster recovery** – It is proven that children recover from a sickness 31 percent faster when they are taken care of by a parent. Parents who do not have paid sick days are more likely to neglect or delay the medical care needed for their children.
- **Allow parents to get their child preventive care** - The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a child have 6 check-ups in their first year, 3 check-ups in the second, and 17 check-ups between the ages of 2 and 21. Less than half of the children in the U.S are able to receive these check-ups. If parents have access to paid sick days, they are able to get their children to the doctor for check-ups and critical preventive care, such as vaccinations.
- **Prevent family crises'** – If a parent takes 3.5 unpaid sick days, the average family will lose a month's worth of groceries. Working parents are forced to choose between feeding their families and caring for themselves or their children.

### Thirteen states have paid sick days:

Arizona, California, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington. Of the 13 states with paid sick days, nine of them rank higher than Virginia in overall health.

*Sources: Family Values @ Work, National Partnership for Women & Families, United Health Foundation, and U.S Bureau of Labor & Statistics, Economic Policy Institute, Center for American Progress, Contagion Nation: A comparison of Paid Sick Day Policies, Health Affairs, Human Impact Partners*