



SB 616 (Gonzalez) Paid Sick Days for All Working Californians

SUMMARY

Senate Bill (SB) 616 would increase the amount paid sick leave days an employer is required to provide an employee from three to seven.

EXISTING LAW

The Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act of 2014 (AB 1522, Chapter 317, Statutes of 2014) requires employers provide three paid sick days to employees who work 30 or more days within a year from commencement of employment. Current law also specifies that paid sick days accrue at a rate of no less than one hour for every 30 hours worked, and may be used beginning on the 90th day of employment.

Cities and states around the nation have followed California's lead and provided workers with even more generous paid sick leave protections. Currently, Washington, Arizona, Oregon, New York, New Jersey, Colorado, Michigan, Massachusetts, Maryland, Vermont, Maine, and Connecticut, and cities across California including San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Monica, San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, West Hollywood and Emeryville have granted workers the right to use at least five or more paid sick days per year.

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the lifesaving impacts of paid sick leave policies, while clearly exposing the gaps in our existing safety-net for working families.

Research has shown emergency paid leave prevented approximately 400 positive COVID-19 cases per day in each state where workers temporarily gained access to paid sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act¹. During the ongoing public health crisis, emergency paid sick leave was one of the most effective tools in curbing the spread of COVID-19 and helped keep transmission rates down as the state moves towards a safe reopening.

However, temporary expansions of paid sick leave policies are not enough to provide a reliable safety-net for workers and adequately protect public health year-round.

Since higher wage earners are likelier to have access to more generous benefits, a failure to raise California's minimum requirements for paid sick leave will disproportionately harm low-wage workforces who can least afford to miss work and jeopardize their ability to make ends meet.

For those without earned sick leave benefits, missing three and a half days of work equates to losing an amount of money equivalent to an entire family's monthly grocery budget². This especially disadvantages those in service sector jobs traditionally dominated by

¹ Pichler, Stefan, Katherine Wen, and Nicolas R. Ziebarth. "COVID-19 Emergency Sick Leave Has Helped Flatten The Curve In The United States: Study examines the impact of emergency sick leave on the spread of COVID-19." *Health Affairs* 39.12, October 2020.

² National Partnership for Women and Families. [Paid Sick Days Lead to Cost Savings for All](#). April 2013.

women and Latinos, including childcare providers, and janitorial, retail, food service and hospitality workers.

Furthermore, paid sick leave can reduce employers' overall costs by containing potential disease outbreaks and allowing workers to recover faster and return to work more productive³. Studies have also shown that paid sick leave decreases the probability of job separation by at least 25%⁴. Workers with paid sick leave are less likely to leave their jobs,⁵ saving businesses money on turnover expenses such as interviewing and training⁶ which can cost anywhere between 25-200% of a worker's annual salary⁷.

SOLUTION

SB 616 would require employers to provide seven sick days to employees who work 30 or more days within a year from commencement of employment.

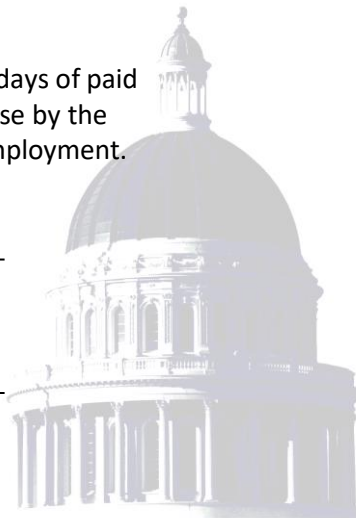
This bill would require an employer provide 7 days of paid sick leave to be available to the employee to use by the completion of the employee's 280th day of employment.

SUPPORT

California Labor Federation (Sponsor)

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³ Joint Economic Committee, "Expanding Access to Paid Sick Leave: The Impact of the Healthy Families Act on America's Workers" (March 2010), http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?a=Files.Serve&File_id=abf8aca7-6b94-4152-b720-2d8d04b81ed6; Council of Economic Advisers, "The Economics of Paid and Unpaid Leave" (June 2014), http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/leave_report_final.pdf.

⁴ Hill HD. Paid Sick Leave and Job Stability. *Work Occup.* 2013 May 1;40(2):10.1177/0730888413480893. doi: 10.1177/0730888413480893. PMID: 24235780; PMID: PMC3825168.

⁵ Vicky Lovell, Valuing Good Health: An Estimate of Costs and Savings for the Healthy Families Act, *Inst. for Women's Pol'y Res.* 7 (Apr. 2005), <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/wpallimport/files/iwpr-export/publications/B248.pdf>.

⁶ Christine Siegwath Meyer et al., Work-Family Benefits: Which Ones Maximize Profits?, *13 J. Managerial Issues* 28 (2001)

⁷ Abay Asfaw et al., Potential Economic Benefits of Paid Sick Leave in Reducing Absenteeism Related to the Spread of Influenza-Like Illness, *59 J. Occupational & Envtl. Med.* 822, 826 (2017).