

**From:** Coriell, Scott [Scott.Coriell@vermont.gov]  
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**To:** Coriell, Scott  
**Subject:** Gov. Peter Shumlin Signs Paid Sick Days Bill Into Law

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 9, 2016

**Gov. Peter Shumlin Signs Paid Sick Days Bill Into Law**

**MONTPELIER** – Joined by Vermont businesses, legislative leaders, and others, Gov. Peter Shumlin today made Vermont the fifth state in America to guarantee paid sick days to its citizens by signing into law H.187.

At the bill signing, Gov. Shumlin thanked the many advocates and legislators who have worked for years on this issue, Speaker Shap Smith and Senate President Pro Tem John Campbell who provided the leadership this biennium to get the bill through the Legislature, and the many businesses who provided their voice in support of the policy. The Governor was also joined for the bill signing by the Obama Administration's Sharon Block, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Department of Labor.

While many Vermont employers offer this important benefit to their employees, there remain about 60,000 Vermonters statewide who do not have access to any paid sick leave. Many of those employees are low income earners. Gov. Shumlin called for passage of paid sick days in his State of the State Address in January, noting the public health concerns that arise from the lack of access to the benefit. Nationwide, almost 90 percent of food workers report that they go to work sick, and according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 65 percent of foodborne illnesses result from the handling of food by someone who's sick.

H.187 requires employers to provide a paid time off policy to include a minimum of three days in a twelve-month period to full-time employees beginning in 2017 and five days from 2019 going forward.

"When Vermonters do not have access to paid sick leave, they often go to work anyway, putting the health of other workers, the workplace, and all of us at risk," Gov. Shumlin said. "There can't be too many Vermonters who believe people should face the decision of going to work sick or potentially losing their job. When Vermonters are sick, we want them to get healthy. This law will provide dignity for employees, a more productive workforce for employers, and a safer workplace for all of us."

"The paid sick days law was created to mirror the standards of dignity set by responsible businesses that take care of their employees," said House Speaker Shap Smith. "Now the 60,000 Vermont workers who were denied earned time off no longer have to choose between supporting their family or taking care of themselves or their loved ones. That's a Vermont value we should all be proud of."

“This bill is a compromise providing workers with necessary paid time off while balancing the concerns of the employer community,” said Senate President Pro Tem John Campbell. “The bill will give an important health benefit to workers, without being overly burdensome to our great Vermont businesses. There was a tremendous amount of hard work that went into passing this bill through the Senate, and I thank all the advocates, administrators, and legislators who helped H.187 through the Legislature.”

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