

Paid Sick Days Campaign 2014

A minimum standard of paid sick time is good for Vermont's economy, Vermont's families, and is a public health priority.

Good for the Economy: Paid sick time helps people keep their jobs and their income when they or a family member get sick or need to see a doctor; it keeps money in the pockets of working people so that they can afford the basics and spend it in the local economy.

Good for Families: Everyone wants what's best for their children, but without paid sick days many parents are forced to choose between their families' financial stability and their children's health; with the majority of children living in households where all the adults are working, paid sick days are critical to ensure that parents can meet their obligations at work and care for their families.

Good for Public Health: Studies show that universal paid sick days result in a reduction in contagion throughout the community, significantly reduce emergency room visits, and lead to earlier treatment of chronic conditions; particularly as Vermont moves toward single payer health care, the benefits of universal paid sick days benefit us all.



Existing Paid Sick Days Laws:

- San Francisco, 2006
- Washington D.C. 2008
- Seattle, WA, 2011
- Connecticut, 2011
- Portland, OR, 2013
- New York City, 2013

Who supports H.208 in Vermont?

The bill was introduced in the House with 35 legislative sponsors.

A broad coalition of organizations, health professionals, educators, and businesses, along with Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility are working together to pass this legislation.

Who opposes H.208 in Vermont and What do they Say?

The State Chamber of Commerce will be the strongest opponent of this legislation. They will argue that this sounds good on paper, but now is not the time to force employers to provide paid sick days. They will argue that this proposal is bad for the economy and will put too big a burden on small businesses when they can least afford it. They will say that businesses that can afford to provide paid sick days already do it, and those who don't can't afford another costly government mandate. This law does not allow for any exemptions for small businesses who cannot afford it and a threshold of businesses with more than 25 employees would be much more palatable to the chamber. With the economy already struggling, they will claim that this will cost jobs and discourage new businesses from coming to Vermont. And finally, they will assert that this would hit small businesses the hardest, and could force some of them to choose between laying off workers and shutting down or moving out of state.

Facts:

- 75% of businesses in Vermont already provide some form of paid time off to their employees. Combined Time Off policies meet the requirements of this legislation, which means that only about a quarter of businesses in the state will see new costs associated with this legislation.ⁱ
- 90% of Vermont's private sector businesses have fewer than 20 employees.ⁱⁱ
- The gross cost of the proposed paid sick time standard to businesses not currently meeting the requirements represents a one-time payroll increase of between 1 and 2.5%.
- Paid sick time policies result in indirect savings to businesses:
 - Paid Sick Time reduces voluntary job mobility (turnover) by three to six percentage points.^{iii & iv}
 - Influenza transmission rates suggest that a sick worker who is in the workplace while contagious is likely to infect 1.8 of every ten co-workers.^v
- H.208 is anticipated to yield a net savings to VT employers of \$3 million due to reductions in turn-over and flu contagion.^{vi}
- Universal paid sick time legislation would result in healthcare savings to the state: reducing the cost of emergency room visits along by an estimated \$5 million.^{vii}
- Paid sick time legislation does not hurt the economy. In areas where this legislation has passed, no negative impacts have been documented.
- Five years after implementation two-thirds of San Francisco's employers support paid sick leave legislation.^{viii}

A Paid Sick Time Standard Makes Sense for Vermont: Vermont's economy is built on stable, tight-knit communities and successful small businesses. Paid sick days are good for Vermonters and Vermont's businesses. One of the best ways to get our local economy going is to keep money in the pockets Vermonters so that we can spend it in Vermont; paid sick days help Vermonters keep their jobs and their income when either they or a family member get sick or need to see a doctor. Vermont business owners who provide paid sick days to their employees report a more stable, reliable, and long-term workforce. None of us should have to choose between our health and our ability to support our selves and our loved ones. Vermont employers know the value of good employees who stay with them and help their businesses grow. This bill ensures that all employers in Vermont provide jobs that build our communities, reflect our values, and support our families.

ⁱ VT Department of Labor Fringe Benefits Study, 2011

ⁱⁱ VT Department of Labor

ⁱⁱⁱ Siegwirth Meyer, C. et al. (2001, Spring). Work-Family Benefits: Which Ones Maximize Profits?, *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 13(1). & Cooper and Monheit 1993

^{iv} Cooper, Philip F., and Alan C. Monheit. 1993. "Does Employment-Related Health Insurance Inhibit Job Mobility?" *Inquiry* 30 (Winter): 400-416.

^v Longini, Ira M., Jr., James S. Koopman, Michael Haber, and George A. Cotsonis. 1988. "Statistical Inference for Infectious Diseases: Risk-Specific Household and Community Transmission Parameters." *American Journal of Epidemiology* 128 (10): 845 – 859.

^{vi} Institute for Women's Policy Research: *Valuing Good Health in Vermont: The Costs and Benefits of Earned Health Care Time*. April 2013

^{vii} *ibid.*

^{viii} Drago, Robert and Vicky Lovell. 2011. *San Francisco's Paid Leave Ordinance: Outcomes for Employers and Employees*.