

Good afternoon, my name is Charlie Murphy, I live and work in Bennington. I am a volunteer with the Vermont Workers Center. What I am going to speak to is not about me. I work for a nonprofit, the Vermont Center for Independent Living. VCIL cares for and respects their employees by offering us Paid Sick Days as one of our benefits.

I am going to talk about my mother and a friend of hers. My mom worked retail the last 30 years of her work life. She did this from the age of 40 to 70 years of age. She worked in the Bennington area for two nationally known department stores that were here. They barely kept her ahead of the minimum wage by 30, 40, or 50 cents an hour. However back when she was working there, a widow with two children, and the dollar being able to buy more than what it does now, we got by.

A saving grace that the stores offered her was Paid Sick days. If she was sick with the flu or her acid reflux acted up, she lived on Tums, she could stay home to mend and recuperate. She did not have to go in and lift boxes, stock shelves, or stand in front of a door in weather like this, with the cold draft blowing on her as she ran her cash register.

I was talking with a friend of hers after her death a year and a half ago. We reminisced about them working together. Her friend moved on and worked at Wal-Mart where they did not offer any Paid Sick Days. She had health issues, it was a hardship to work while she struggled with her health.

In these economically hard times a person should not live in fear of losing their job, not being able to pay their rent, mortgage, electric bill, fuel bill, or to keep a car on the road, if they are too sick to work. We need to figure this out, treat people with respect and dignity, and do the right thing by passing a Paid Sick Day bill.

Thank you for your time.

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