

VLIAC Vermont Low Income Advocacy Council

“Celebrating 42 years of representing low income Vermonters”

The Vermont Low Income Advocacy Council Support the VT Paid Sick Days Coalition efforts to pass H. 208 **an act relating to absence from work for health care and safety.**

This legislation will allow Vermont workers to accrue one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to a maximum of 56 hours per year for full-time employees and a pro-rated amount for part-time workers. The legislation also calls for safe days for victims of domestic violence.

At present, 25% of private sector businesses do not provide any form of paid time off to their employees. This equates to nearly 60,000 working Vermonters who do not have any paid sick time.

For hourly employees, especially lower wage workers without the economic flexibility to lose a day of wages - this often means the hard choice to go to work even when they or a child are sick or need to see a doctor. When they do stay home, and without pay - it can mean not having enough money to afford the basics or, worse, losing their job.

This policy is good for Vermont's economy, families, and is a public health priority. Paid sick days help people keep their jobs and their income when either they or a family member get sick or need to see the doctor. Income in the hands of lower wage earners goes right back into the economy.

Studies show that universal paid sick day's results in a reduction in contagion throughout the community significantly reduce emergency room visits, and leads to earlier treatment of chronic conditions.

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.

There should be no question that mandated paid leave is just basic decency in the workplace. This legislation is pro-healthy family and pro-healthy workplace.

The benefits of universal paid sick days will benefit all of us.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Lafayette

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