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Letter in Support of SB 2672

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**Submitted by: Feroza Freeland,
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Dear Legislators:

We write to encourage you to **vote YES on SB 2672**, which would provide Tennessee state employees with up to five days of paid leave when they need to stay home to care for a child who contracts COVID-19, or whose school or daycare closes due to COVID-19.

A Better Balance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting working women, caregivers, and families. Our regional Southern Office is based in Nashville and serves families across Tennessee. We work to ensure that all individuals can care for themselves and their loved ones without risking their economic security.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted why all Tennesseans must be able to take the time they need to care for sick family members without worrying about losing a paycheck. Without adequate paid leave, many simply cannot afford to stay home when they or their child are sick.

Providing paid leave for caregiving needs related to COVID-19 is a smart business investment for Tennessee, because it will help make the state more competitive in recruiting and retaining the best and brightest employees. Research shows that providing paid sick leave helps to increase employee productivity and improve retention, which reduces costs related to turnover, re-hiring, and re-training.¹ Access to paid sick leave is critical not just for individuals and their families, but for the health of the overall community as well.

Furthermore, the policy of providing paid leave for COVID-related needs has a proven track record of success. In 2020, Congress passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) with bipartisan support. Among other provisions, this law provided many workers with temporary paid leave to care for a child who needed to stay home due to COVID-19. Research showed that in states like Tennessee, this emergency paid leave policy under the federal

¹ A Better Balance, *Sick Without A Safety Net*, March 2022, <https://www.abetterbalance.org/sick-without-a-safety-net/>.



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FFCRA—which expired at the end of 2020—prevented an estimated 400 COVID-19 cases *per day*.²

Tennessee voters overwhelmingly support access to paid leave. According to a July 2020 poll, 69% of Tennessee voters believe that state government should play a role in ensuring workers have access to paid sick days and paid family leave, including 63% of Independent voters and 55% of Republican voters.³

In conclusion, this legislation builds on the successful, bipartisan model of the federal FFCRA and would ensure that state employees can take the time they need to care for their children without worrying about sacrificing their income or savings. This policy would not only support state employees and their families, but it would also give the state a competitive edge in today's tight labor market. For these reasons, we urge you to **vote YES on SB 2672**.

Thank you for your consideration.

² Stefan Pichler et al., *COVID-19 Emergency Sick Leave Has Helped Flatten The Curve in The United States*, Health Affairs (October 2020), <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00863>.

³ Multi-State Poll: Tennessee Findings, State Innovation Exchange (July 2020), p. 13, https://stateinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/TSPolling_TN_SiX_Deck_d4_2020.09.16.pdf.