

FACT SHEET: Louisiana Families Need Paid Sick Leave

No one should be required to work when sick. Not only is it bad for the sick worker, it is harmful for their co-workers, their employer, and their community. In Louisiana, there is no guaranteed right to paid sick leave. The absence of such a policy has reverberating effects that are evident in the State's poor health outcomes. When workers must choose between their own personal health and their family's financial well-being, they often have no other option but to attend work while sick.

Paid sick leave will benefit Louisiana businesses.

- Paid sick leave has been shown to provide benefits to businesses including increased productivity, higher job satisfaction and commitment, reduced spread of contagious illnesses in the workplace, and direct savings for the business.¹
- Paid sick leave helps reduce worker turnover, which leads to reduced costs incurred from recruiting, interviewing, and training new hires.²
- Paid sick leave also reduces the risk of “presenteeism”—the widespread phenomenon of workers coming to work with illnesses and health conditions that reduce their productivity—a problem that leads to costly disruptions for employers through the spread of illness in the workplace and costs the national economy \$160 billion annually (\$207.6 billion after adjusting for inflation).³
- According to a recent survey, paid sick leave is the top workplace benefit young adults prioritize⁴. Young adults—millions of whom are caregivers—are disproportionately concentrated in jobs that are less likely to provide paid leave, so they would especially benefit from a statewide paid sick leave policy.

Paid sick leave is necessary to help rectify Louisiana's low public health ranking.

Nationwide, nearly 33 million private-sector workers do not have access to paid sick leave, with low-wage workers, Latine workers, and African-American workers disproportionately less likely to have paid sick time.⁵ In the South, nearly 30% of workers do not have access to a single paid

¹ A Better Balance, *Paid Sick Leave is Good for Business*, May 12, 2023, <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/sickleavebusinesscase/>

² Christine Siegwirth Meyer et al., *Work-Family Benefits: Which Ones Maximize Profits?*, 13 J. Managerial Issues 28 (2001).

³ Walter F. Stewart et al., *Lost Productive Work Time Costs from Health Conditions in the United States: Results from the American Productivity Audit*, 45 J. Occupational & Env'tl. Med. 1234 (Dec. 2003), <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-sick-days/lost-productive-work-time-american-productivity-audit.pdf>

⁴ Georgetown University McDonough School of Business, *Young Adults and Workplace Wellness*, 2023, <https://businessforimpact.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Final-Young-Adult-Report-.pdf>

⁵ See “National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits In The United States – March 2019,” U.S. Dep’t of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019), Table 31, <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2019/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2019.pdf>; “Latinos and Their Families Need Paid Sick Days,” National Partnership for Women & Families (March 2020), <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-sick-days/latino-workers-need-paid-sick-days.pdf>; “African Americans and Their Families Need Paid Sick Days,” National Partnership for Women & Families (January 2017), <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-sick-days/african-american-workers-need-paid-sick-days.pdf>.

sick day.⁶ In Louisiana, it is estimated that over 40% of all workers in the state lack access to paid sick leave.⁷

- Louisiana consistently ranks near the bottom when it comes to America’s public health rankings, including factors such as mental health, drug-related deaths, and chronic health conditions.⁸
- Paid sick leave has broad public health benefits and helps reduce the spread of contagious illness.⁹ People without access to paid sick leave are more likely to go to work while they have a contagious illness and are nearly twice as likely to send a sick child to school or daycare than those with access to this critical protection.¹⁰
- A lack of access to paid sick days is particularly harmful for service industry workers. Nearly two-thirds of restaurant workers have cooked or served food while sick¹¹, and in 2011, nearly one in five food service workers went to work while vomiting or with diarrhea, creating dangerous health conditions.¹² Over 167,240 workers are employed in the food service industry in Louisiana.¹³
- Workers with access to paid sick days report better general health than workers without it and are less likely to delay preventive medical care for themselves or their loved ones.¹⁴
- Because of their ability to seek preventive care, workers with paid sick days are also less likely to use hospital emergency departments, reducing national emergency department visits and medical costs by \$1.1 billion annually.¹⁵

Paid sick leave will enhance the overall prosperity of Louisiana families.

- Paid sick days allow workers to deal with unexpected illness and family emergencies without sacrificing their income or savings, or even losing their jobs altogether.
- Implementing a state-wide paid sick day policy is an easy, achievable way to protect families’ economic security when they need it most. Louisiana must protect its working families by joining the growing number of states that have already enacted paid sick leave policies.

⁶ “National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits In The United States – March 2019,” U.S. Dep’t of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019), Table 31, <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2019/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2019.pdf>.

⁷ Access to Paid Sick Days in Louisiana, Institute for Women’s Policy Research (March 2015), <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/wpallimport/files/iwpr-export/publications/B346%20Louisiana%20Access%20Rates.pdf>.

⁸ United Health Foundation, America’s Health Rankings, *2022 Annual Report*, <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/learn/reports/2022-annual-report>

⁹ Vicky Lovell, *Paid Sick Days Improve Public Health by Reducing the Spread of Disease*, Institute for Women’s Policy Research (Feb. 2006), <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/wpallimport/files/iwpr-export/publications/B250.pdf>.

¹⁰ Tom W. Smith & Jibum Kim, Paid Sick Days: Attitudes and Experiences, Nat’l Opinion Res. Ctr. at U. of Chi. (June 2010), <https://www.issuelab.org/resource/paid-sick-days-attitudes-and-experiences.html>.

¹¹ Rest. Opportunities Ctrs. United, *Serving While Sick: High Risks & Low Benefits for the Nation’s Restaurant Workforce, and Their Impact on the Consumer* (Sept. 30, 2010), <https://chapters.rocunited.org/publications/roc-serving-while-sick/>.

¹² Steven Sumner et al., Factors Associated with Food Workers Working While Experiencing Vomiting or Diarrhea, 74 J. Food Protection 215 (2011), http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ebs/ehsnet/Docs/JFP_ill_food_workers.pdf.

¹³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *May 2022 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates Louisiana*, https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_la.htm#35-0000.

¹⁴ Kevin Miller et al., Paid Sick Days and Health: Cost Savings from Reduced Emergency Department Visits, Inst. for Women’s Pol’y Res. (Nov. 2011), <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/paid-sick-days-and-health-cost-savings-from-reduced-emergency-department-visits>.

¹⁵ *Id.*