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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunday, March 8, 2020

**The Virginia Interfaith Center calls on legislators to protect public health
and pass a paid sick day bill today**

*“On the same day that the [first Virginian tested positive](#) for coronavirus (March 7), the Virginia Senate refused to take a vote for a bill ([SB481](#)) to require employers to offer paid sick days to workers. **I am deeply disappointed in our legislators and call on them to vote TODAY to pass a paid sick day bill.** This is a public health emergency.”*

- Kim Bobo, Executive Director, the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

RICHMOND, Va – In the midst of an imminent coronavirus pandemic, the Virginia Senate has **one last opportunity today** to pass a bill to require employers to provide paid sick days to workers. The Senate will reconvene for the last time at 11 a.m., and the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy calls on legislators to pass SB 481.

The bill, sponsored by Senator Barbara Favola, would require large businesses (with 15 or more employees) to provide their workers with up to 40 hours/five days of paid sick time (or PTO) per year. The bill would also require smaller businesses (under 15 employees) to provide up to 16 hours/two days of *unpaid* time off.

If this bill does not pass, many of the [1.2 million Virginians](#) who have no paid time off will be forced to go to work sick and send their children to school sick. They will spread disease across the Commonwealth. This is a public health emergency.

When the bill first came to the Senate, it passed 23-17, but since then, legislators have been hammered by lobbyists from the National Federation of Independent Businesses, the Virginia Retail Federation, the Virginia Manufacturers Association, United Airlines, American Airlines, and the Virginia Poultry Federation.

Even more shocking, the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging and Travel Association has lobbied against this bill when [81 percent of food service workers](#) have no paid sick days! More than [half of all Norovirus outbreaks](#) can be traced back to sick food service workers who were forced to choose between working sick and losing their pay or their job.

In addition, 75 percent of childcare workers, and 47 percent of nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides have no paid sick days. These workers handle our food and care for our children, the sick and the elderly. In fact, one of the most significant coronavirus outbreaks occurred in a nursing home.

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy calls upon the Virginia Senate to pass a paid sick day bill today.

Kim Bobo, Executive Director of VA Interfaith Center will be at the General Assembly all day today and is available for interviews.(call 773-391-8844)

Read Kim Bobo's op ed: ['It's like Typhoid Mary': Restaurant workers spread diseases because they have no paid sick days](#)

Contacts:

Roberta Oster, 804-615-4192

Roberta@virginiainterfaithcenter.org

Kim Bobo, 773-391-8844

Kim@virginiainterfaithcenter.org

[LINK TO FACT SHEET](#)

[VIDEO OF HOME HEALTH WORKER WHO HAS NO PAID SICK DAYS](#)

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The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy advocates economic, racial, social and environmental justice in Virginia's policies and practices through education, prayer, and action.

VICPP is a non-partisan coalition of more than 750 faith communities working for a more just society.