

FACT SHEET



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Support paid sick days for all employees

H.B. 2137 – Delegate Guzman

Problem: Approximately 41 percent of private sector workers, **1.2 million workers in Virginia, have no paid sick days** or any paid time off (PTO). This creates a crisis for low-wage workers who must choose between taking a sick day for themselves or their children and getting paid. Workers who go to work sick endanger their co-workers, the public and the ability of the business to remain open.

Policy solution: The Essential Workers Paid Sick Day Bill, sponsored by Delegate Guzman creates a paid sick day standard to allow workers to earn five paid sick days accrued at one hour who works on average at least 20 hours per week or 90 hours per month (at least one hour of paid sick leave benefit for every 30 hours worked) that can be used for themselves or to care for sick family members.

Who benefits: All residents in the Commonwealth of Virginia benefit from a paid sick days standard. It is good for workers, families, businesses and public health. A recent poll showed that 83 percent of Virginia registered voters support a policy proposal to provide paid sick days. Strong majorities of Democrats (96 percent), Independents (78 percent) and Republicans (72 percent) support a paid sick day standard.

What are the categories: The bill defines essential workers as workers employed in the following categories:

1. Law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, and other first responders;
2. Workers at essential retail businesses, as defined in the Governor's Executive Order 72;
3. Health care providers; Long-term care providers;

4. Food manufacturing and supplier workers;
5. Home care providers;
6. Child care providers;
7. Home care workers, such as home health care, at-home hospice, home dialysis, or home infusion;
8. Domestic workers;
9. Educators and educational support staff;
10. Transportation workers;
11. Cleaning and support services required to support essential workers and businesses.

How does it benefit essential workers? Paid sick days can be used for the employee's need for medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition. Paid sick days can also be used for the care of a family member who needs medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition; or care of a family member who needs preventive medical care

How will this impact small businesses? Most Virginia businesses already provide paid sick days or PTO. These businesses will not be required to provide additional paid sick leave to any employee that is eligible for paid leave under the policy.

Although we know that many essential services are thriving during the pandemic, the bill does provide a hardship waiver to businesses that have evidence paid sick days would impact the financial viability or sustainability of the business.

Fifteen states have already passed paid sick day standards and most of them rank higher than Virginia in overall health. *Sources: Family Values @ Work, National Partnership for Women & Families, United Health Foundation, U.S Bureau of Labor & Statistics, YouGov American poll*