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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 4, 2021

## **Virginians for Paid Sick Days to Launch Virtual Community Tour**

**Richmond, Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2021, 10 am [\(Zoom link\)](#)**

*“This is a public health emergency. Our coalition is calling on Virginia legislators to expand access to paid sick days. This will help stop the spread of COVID-19 and enable our economy to safely reopen.” - Kim Bobo, Executive Director of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy.*

RICHMOND – On Tuesday, Jan. 5, the [Virginians for Paid Sick Days Coalition](#) will launch a virtual tour of four communities in Virginia to hear from business owners, public officials, workers, and health and faith leaders who are on the front lines of the fight for paid sick days. The “Paid Sick Days for Virginia” tour will kick off Tuesday at 10 a.m. with a Zoom press tour with Richmond leaders including Dr. Danny Avula, Director of Richmond and Henrico Health Departments.

The Coalition is calling on Virginia lawmakers to pass legislation to expand access to paid sick days, such as the bill sponsored by Delegate Elizabeth Guzman that would require employers to provide essential workers with 40 hours of paid sick leave. The Coalition sees paid sick days as a critical issue that must be addressed by the General Assembly, which starts on January 13<sup>th</sup>.

The tour highlights the importance of protecting frontline workers and public health across the Commonwealth. The tour will run throughout January in Richmond, Fairfax, Hampton Roads, and Charlottesville.

**Join us on the first stop on the virtual press tour in Richmond, Tues., Jan. 5, at 10am**

**[\(Zoom link\)](#) Speakers:**

- Kim Bobo, Executive Director, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
- Dr. Danny Avula, Director of Richmond City and Henrico Health Depts.
- Buzz Grossberg, owner of Buzz & Ned's Real Barbecue restaurant
- Joshua Briere, restaurant worker
- Mark Smith, owner of Midas of Richmond
- Rev. Dr. Faith Harris, interim co-director, Virginia Interfaith Power and Light

Paid sick days will allow workers to care for their short-term health needs or those of a family member, including going to the doctor and getting tested for COVID-19. Businesses will benefit from higher employee productivity, healthier workplaces, and lower employee turnover.

Studies show that employees working while sick cost the national economy approximately [\\$160 billion per year](#).

Even before COVID-19, 41 percent of private sector workers, [1.2 million workers in Virginia](#), had no paid sick days or any paid time off. A [new study by Harvard University researchers](#) shows that only one-third of Virginia service-sector workers at large employers have access to paid sick days. The lack of paid sick days creates a crisis for low wage workers who must choose between taking a sick day for themselves or to care for a family member and getting paid. If they bring COVID-19 into the workplace, they risk the health of hundreds and potentially thousands of people. It's time for Virginia to pass a paid sick day bill.

## **RESOURCES:**

### **[Factsheet](#)**

[Virginians for Paid Sick Days](#) is a coalition of 25 organizations across the state fighting to establish a paid sick day standard that keeps Virginians healthy and keeps our economy running.

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