

NEWS



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BUSINESSES AND FAMILIES SUFFER WITHOUT PAID SICK LEAVE

New Report Finds that Half of All Workers Do Not Have Paid Sick Leave

Lack of Paid Sick Leave Jeopardizes Health, Productivity, and Economic Security

Washington, DC...Only half of all workers in the United States have paid sick leave, according to a report, *No Time to be Sick: Why Everyone Suffers When Workers Don't Have Paid Sick Leave*, released today by the Institute for Women's Policy Research. Using data from the U.S. Department of Labor, the study found:

- Nearly 60 million workers go without paid sick leave.
- Only one in three workers has paid sick leave to care for sick children, forcing over 85 million workers to choose between keeping their jobs and caring for their families.
- Only one in four low-wage workers and one in six part-time workers have paid sick leave benefits. The majority of both groups of workers are women.
- Workers in state and local government are twice as likely to have sick leave coverage (89 percent) as private-sector workers (45 percent).

"It is shocking to see that only half of all workers are able to take paid time off for health-related reasons. Paid sick leave is not just an employee benefit; it also serves as an important work support by allowing for a healthy, productive and efficient workforce," noted IWPR Study Director and report author, Vicky Lovell.

Paid sick leave provides workers with an opportunity to regain their health and return to full productivity at work, and can reduce employees' overall absence by preventing contagion among co-workers. When a child or other family member is sick, paid leave can also reduce job turnover by preventing the need for workers to take unauthorized time off work, which can lead to job termination.

"Family providers should not have to risk losing work and pay in order to care for themselves or their family members' health needs," stated Vicky Lovell. "Women in particular suffer from the lack of paid sick leave as they continue to be our primary caregivers and are most likely to need to leave work to care for children and relatives."

The study's primary policy recommendations include expanding existing paid sick leave programs and adding wage replacement to unpaid sick leave; allowing care for sick family members to be covered under paid sick leave; increasing options for caring for sick children and

expanding sick-child care centers; and making work schedules more flexible so workers can adapt their hours at work to fit the demands of their health-related caregiving responsibilities.

The full report can be accessed at www.iwpr.org.

The Institute for Women's Policy Research is a public policy research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating the debate on issues of critical importance to women and their families. IWPR focuses on issues of poverty and welfare, employment and earnings, work and family, health and safety, and women's civic and political participation. IWPR, an independent, nonprofit, research organization, also works in affiliation with the graduate programs in public policy and women's studies at The George Washington University.