

Latino Workers and Their Families Need Paid Sick Days

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More than **12 million Latino workers** – nearly 60 percent of the Latino workforce – don't have a single paid sick day to use to recover from common illnesses.¹ Many more don't have paid sick days to care for a sick child. When finances for most families are stretched, unemployment is high and jobs are scarce, no worker should lose precious income or be fired for taking time off to recover or care for a sick loved one.

In the U.S., Hardworking Latinos are Forced to Choose Every Day Between Their Health & Their Families' Financial Security

All across the country workers can lose pay or be fired just for getting sick or having a sick child. Latino workers confront this reality all too often.

Latinos – the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. workforce – tend to work in jobs that do not provide paid sick days, jeopardizing workers' own health and the health of their communities.

- ▶ Nearly 44 million workers don't have paid sick days in the United States,² including more than 12 million Latinos. Overall, 58 percent of Latino workers do not have a single paid sick day, including 54 percent of female Latina workers and 60 percent of male Latino workers.³
- ▶ Latino workers have the highest labor force participation rate of any racial or ethnic group⁴ but are more likely to work in occupations in which workers do not have paid sick days, including: food preparation and serving, construction and personal care.⁵
- ▶ Many of these occupations not only have little or no access to paid sick days, but they also require frequent contact with the public. Without paid sick days, workers often have no choice but to go to work sick,⁶ which puts the health of their co-workers and the public at risk.
- ▶ Latino communities were disproportionately affected by the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic, in part because of their lower levels of paid sick days access. It is estimated that an additional five million people were infected with the virus because workers did not have paid sick days, including 1.2 million Latinos.⁷
- ▶ Latinos are also less likely than their peers to report accessing preventive health services such as immunizations, screenings for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers and cholesterol tests.⁸

- ▶ People with access to paid sick days are more likely to visit a doctor and get cancer screenings.⁹ A guaranteed right to earn paid sick days would help ensure that Latinos have access to the full range of necessary health care.

In this economy, getting sick can have serious consequences for the financial security and well-being of Latino workers and their families.

- ▶ Latinos are more likely than other workers to hold jobs that offer wages that are insufficient to raise a family of four above the poverty level.¹⁰ With family budgets already stretched thin, having to take just one day – or even half of a day – away from work without pay can cause significant economic strain.
- ▶ Particularly in this economic climate, in which 11 percent of Latino workers are unemployed,¹¹ fear of job or income loss related to illness make job-protected paid sick days vital to families' economic security and well-being.
- ▶ Research shows that job loss due to illness is a serious threat: Nearly one in six workers report that they or a family member have been fired, disciplined, written up or threatened with being fired for taking time off due to illness or to care for a sick relative.¹²

Latino working families with children need paid sick days so parents can honor their responsibilities to their children without jeopardizing their families' financial security.

- ▶ America's families increasingly rely on two incomes. In nearly two-thirds of families with children, all adults in the household work.¹³ In 2008, 75 percent of Latinos with children under 18 were in the labor force.¹⁴
- ▶ Working parents feel a deep responsibility to take care of their children when they are ill, yet more than half of parents do not have access to paid sick days they can use to care for a sick child.¹⁵
- ▶ When parents don't have paid sick days, children are more likely to be sent to school sick,¹⁶ which affects their ability to learn and also spreads disease to other children. Without a paid sick days standard, parents worried about losing wages or risking their jobs have no choice but to send a sick child to school.
- ▶ Lack of paid sick days also drives up health care costs. Parents without paid sick days are five times more likely than parents with paid sick days to report taking a child or a family member to a hospital emergency room because they could not take time off work to get medical care during work hours.¹⁷ Universal paid sick days could save the United States an estimated \$1.1 billion annually in reduced emergency room costs, more than half of that amount accruing to taxpayer-funded public programs.¹⁸

Latino Working Families Deserve a Solution

Paid sick days legislation would enable millions of workers, including Latinos, to earn paid sick days to recover from short-term illness, care for a sick family member, obtain needed medical or preventive care, or seek assistance related to domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. To date, one state and four cities – Connecticut, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Seattle and Portland, Oregon – have passed paid sick days laws.

Latinos strongly support a paid sick days law, and the benefit to their families would be significant.

- ▶ Overwhelming majorities of all Americans recognize paid sick days as a vital workplace right – including **75 percent of Latinos who support a federal law that would provide a paid sick days standard.**¹⁹
- ▶ A 2010 study by a Congressional committee found that passing a federal paid sick days law would expand paid sick days access to an additional 30 million workers nationwide, including an additional 5.6 million Latino workers (a 78 percent increase over current levels).²⁰

Latino workers deserve a minimum workplace protection that will allow them to both work and meet the needs of their families. There are active paid sick days campaigns all across the country. Stand for working families and learn more at www.PaidSickDays.org.

¹ Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2011, March). *Paid Sick Day Access Rates by Race/Ethnicity/Gender Groups*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/paid-sick-day-access-rates-by-gender-and-race-ethnicity-2010>; U.S. Census Bureau. *Table B24010: Sex by Occupation for the Civilian Employed Population 16 years and Over (Hispanic or Latino)*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>(Unpublished calculation)

² Williams, C., Drago, R., & Miller, K. (2011, January). *44 Million U.S. Workers Lacked Paid Sick Days in 2010: 77 Percent of Food Service Workers Lack Access*. Institute for Women's Policy Research. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/44-million-u.s.-workers-lacked-paid-sick-days-in-2010-77-percent-of-food-service-workers-lacked-access>

³ Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2011, March). *Paid Sick Day Access Rates by Race/Ethnicity/Gender Groups*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/paid-sick-day-access-rates-by-gender-and-race-ethnicity-2010/>

⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012). *Table 3. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by age, sex, and race*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat03.htm>; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012). *Table 4. Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by age and sex*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat04.htm>

⁵ Latinos comprise 24 percent of food preparation and service workers (occupations that have a 23 percent paid sick days access rate), 15 percent of personal care workers (38 percent paid sick days access rate) and 28 percent of construction workers (33 percent paid sick days access rate). U.S. Census Bureau. *Table B24010: Sex by Occupation for the Civilian Employed Population 16 years and Over (Hispanic or Latino)* and *Table B24010: Sex by Occupation for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>(Unpublished calculations). For rates of paid sick days access by occupation, see note 2.

⁶ National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. (2010). *Paid Sick Days: Attitudes and Experiences*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.publicwelfare.org/resources/DocFiles/psd2010final.pdf>

⁷ Kumar, S., Quinn, S.C., Kim, K., et al. (2011, November 17). The Impact of Workplace Policies and Other Social Factors on Self-Reported Influenza-Like Illness Incidence During the 2009 H1N1 Pandemic. *American Journal of Public Health, 102*(1), 134-140. Retrieved 17 April 2012, from http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/documents/science/AJPH_2011_300307v1.pdf

⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2004). "Access to Health-Care and Preventive Services Among Hispanics and Non-Hispanics—United States, 2001-2002." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly 53, 14*: 937-941. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5340a2.htm>

⁹ Peipins, L., Soman, A., Berkowitz, Z., et al. (2012, July 12). The lack of paid sick leave as a barrier to cancer screening and medical care-seeking: results from the National Health Interview Survey. *BMC Public Health 12*(520). Retrieved 16 July 2012, from <http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-12-520.pdf>

¹⁰ Mishel, L., Bernstein, J., & Shierholz, H. (2009). *The State of Working America 2008-2009*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

¹¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012, July). *Table A-3. Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by sex and age*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t03.htm>

¹² See note 6.

¹³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. (2012, April). *Table 4. Families with own children: Employment status of parents by age of youngest child and family type, 2010-11 annual averages*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.t04.htm> (Unpublished calculation)

¹⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2008). *Table 5. Employment status by sex, presence and age of children, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, March 2008*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-table5-2009.pdf>

¹⁵ Smith, K., & Schaefer, A. (2012, June). *Who Cares for the Sick Kids? Parents' Access to Paid Time to Care for a Sick Child*. Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire publication. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/CarseySearch/search.php?id=197>

¹⁶ See note 6.

¹⁷ Ibid. (Unpublished calculation)

¹⁸ Miller, K., Williams, C., & Yi, Y. (2011, October 31). *Paid Sick Days and Health: Cost Savings from Reduced Emergency Department Visits*. Institute for Women's Policy Research publication. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/paid-sick-days-and-health-cost-savings-from-reduced-emergency-department-visits>

¹⁹ See note 6.

²⁰ Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress. (2010, March). *Expanding Access to Paid Sick Leave: The Impact of the Healthy Families Act on America's Workers*. Retrieved 20 July 2012, from http://jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?a=Files.Serve&File_id=abf8aca7-6b94-4152-b720-2d8d04b81ed6

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care and Policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at www.NationalPartnership.org.

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