

Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence Need **Paid “Safe Days”**

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In the United States, domestic violence results in an estimated 1,200 deaths and two million injuries among women – and nearly 600,000 injuries among men – annually.¹ In 2007, 248,300 individuals were raped or sexually assaulted.² And approximately one million women and 371,000 men are stalked each year.³ **Incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking are tragically common and affect a large number of workers. Our country’s workplace policies must better reflect this reality and provide survivors the support and job protection they need to recover – through a paid sick and safe days standard.**

The Need is Clear

Domestic violence survivors often need to take time away from work to seek help and leave their abusive situation. **A paid sick days standard that would guarantee job-protected, paid “safe days” would keep survivors who are seeking assistance from having to risk their jobs or financial security.**

- ▶ **Paid safe days protect survivors’ jobs when they seek help – a particularly important protection for low-income workers who can’t afford to take unpaid days off.**
 - ▶ Each year, victims of severe domestic violence are forced to miss nearly eight million days of paid work.⁴ Between 25 and 50 percent of domestic violence survivors report losing a job, at least in part due to the domestic violence.⁵ In many cases, this job loss is preventable.
 - ▶ Low-income workers in particular often don’t have the resources to access medical care, contact the appropriate authorities or obtain a protective order when they experience violence.⁶ Forty percent of low-income workers have no job-protected paid leave of any kind⁷ – no sick, vacation or personal days. This means that low-income survivors of domestic violence often have no time off to seek help or heal from injuries.
- ▶ **Paid safe days give survivors the financial stability to seek safety and continue working.**
 - ▶ Survivors of domestic violence are at an increased risk of harm shortly after separation from an abusive partner.⁸ It is essential that they are able to find shelter, file restraining orders, attend court dates, or receive counseling to prevent further abuse and work disruption.

- ▶ The loss of employment can be particularly devastating for domestic violence survivors because they often need financial security to ensure their safety and the safety of their children. Victims of domestic violence often stay with their abuser because they are financially dependent on that person.⁹
- ▶ **Paid safe days help survivors get the care they need while staying productive at work.**
 - ▶ In one survey of domestic violence survivors, nearly all the survivors surveyed – 96 percent – reported that domestic abuse affected their ability to perform their job duties.¹⁰ Fifty-six percent reported being late to work because of interference from their batterers.¹¹ Ending the abuse and getting help improves a survivor’s life both personally and professionally.
 - ▶ Businesses pay a high price when they don’t support survivors of domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault. The annual cost to businesses of lost productivity due to domestic violence is estimated at \$900 million.¹²

Paid Safe Days Support Survivors and Prevent Job Loss

A paid sick and safe days standard would help survivors of violence access critical services without risking their financial security. Nationwide, cities and states are passing laws that grant time off for victims. The District of Columbia; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Miami-Dade County, Florida; New York City; and Westchester County, New York, have all passed laws¹³ that provide domestic violence survivors with paid or unpaid leave to address legal, medical and psychological issues the result from abuse.¹⁴ And in 2010, at least 16 states introduced bills supporting leave for workers experiencing domestic violence.¹⁵

A federal paid sick and safe days law – such as the Healthy Families Act – would provide a much-needed workplace protection to complement the efforts of cities and states. The bill would set an important national standard that would allow workers to earn up to seven paid sick days a year to care for their own health and that of family members. And it includes a domestic violence provision that would allow workers to use those days to recover from or seek assistance related to domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2008, February). *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: Adverse Health Conditions and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence*, 57(05), 113-117. Retrieved 30 May 2012, from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5705a1.htm>

² Rand, M. (2008, December). *National Crime Victimization Survey 2007*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved 30 May 2012, from <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv07.pdf>

³ Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2006, January). *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Rape Victimization: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey*. National Institute of Justice Publication. Retrieved 30 May 2012, from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/210346.pdf>

⁴ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2003, March). *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Publication. Retrieved 30 May 2012, from <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/IPVBook-a.pdf>

⁵ Lloyd, S. & Taluc, N. (1999). The effect of male violence on female employment. *Violence Against Women*, 5(4), 370-92. Available from <http://vaw.sagepub.com/content/5/4/370.short?rss=1&ssource=mfc>

⁶ Lyon, E. (2000, October). *Welfare, Poverty and Abused Women: New Research and Its Implications*. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, *Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence Publication #10*. Retrieved 30 May 2012, from http://new.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/BCS10_POV.pdf

⁷ Phillips, K. (2004). Getting Time Off. Access to Leave among Working Parents. *National Survey of America's Families, The Urban Institute*, B(B-57). Retrieved 30 May 2012, from http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310977_B-57.pdf

⁸ Bachman, R. & Salzman, L. (1995, August). *Violence Against Women: Estimates From the Redesigned Survey*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved 30 May 2012, from <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/FEMVIED.pdf>

9 National Network to End Domestic Violence. *Frequently Asked Questions About Domestic Violence*. Retrieved 30 May 2012, from <http://www.nnedv.org/resources/stats/faqaboutdv.html#3whystay>

10 Ridley, E. et al. (2005, October). *Domestic violence victims at work: How perpetrators impact employment*. Maine Department of Labor & Family Crisis Services Publication. Retrieved 30 May 2012, from http://www.maine.gov/labor/labor_stats/publications/dvreports/survivorstudy.pdf

11 Swanberg, J., & Logan, T. (2005). Domestic violence and employment: A qualitative study. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 10*(1), 3-17.

12 Max, W. et al. (2004, June). The Economic Toll of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States. *Violence and Victims 19*(3), 259-272.

¹³ Legal Momentum. (2010, September). *State Law Guide: Employment Rights for Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence*. Legal Momentum Publication. Retrieved 30 May 2012, from <http://www.legalmomentum.org/assets/pdfs/employment-rights.pdf>

¹⁴ Sloan Work and Family Research Network. (2007). Domestic Violence and the Workplace: Supporting Workers Experiencing Domestic Violence. *Policy Briefing Series: Work-Family Information for State Legislators, 11*. Retrieved 10 December 2010, from http://workfamily.sas.upenn.edu/sites/workfamily.sas.upenn.edu/files/imported/pdfs/policy_makers11.pdf

¹⁵ Sloan Work and Family Research Network. (2009). *2009 – 2010 Legislative Summary Sheet: Bills Related to Paid Sick Leave Recently Introduced into State Legislatures*. Sloan Work and Family Research Network Publication. Retrieved 10 December 2010, from http://nhwi.s421.sureserver.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/BillsbyTheme_PaidSick.pdf

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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