

# Paid Sick Days Would Benefit 5.2 Million Latino Workers

People across the country work hard every day to provide a good life for themselves and their families. However, everyone gets sick and needs time to care for themselves or a sick family member. When they or a family member becomes ill, many Latino\* workers must decide between going without a paycheck and risking their health or the health of a loved one. Guaranteed paid sick leave would allow workers to recover from an illness or care for a family member, without jeopardizing their financial security.

## The Healthy Families Act

The Healthy Families Act, sponsored by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT-3) and Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), would:

Allow workers at businesses with 15 or more employees to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days each year to be used to recover from their own illnesses, access preventive care, provide care to a sick family member, or attend school meetings related to a child's health condition or disability. Workers in businesses with fewer than 15 employees would earn up to seven job-protected unpaid sick days each year to be used for the same reasons, unless their employers choose to offer paid sick days.

**5.2 million Latinos would benefit from the Healthy Families Act, including 2.7 million Latinas<sup>1</sup>**

Nearly one-quarter of Latinos work in service occupations—the industry least likely to have access to paid sick days and most likely to come in contact with the public.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Latinas often work in industries such as food services and child care, which disproportionately pay lower wages and lack access to paid sick days.<sup>3</sup> The Healthy Families Act provides a solution to these problems by:

\* The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race.

- Strengthening Latinos' financial security. For a typical Latino family without paid sick days, losing an average of 3.3 days due to sickness is equivalent to a family's entire monthly health care budget or its monthly grocery budget.<sup>4</sup> Nearly one in four workers has reported either losing a job or being threatened with job loss for taking a sick day.<sup>5</sup>
- Improving the health of Latino children. Parents without paid sick days are nearly two times more likely to send a sick child to school or day care—putting their child's health and the health of their classmates at risk.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, children whose parents lack paid sick days are less likely to receive routine checkups, dental care, and flu shots.<sup>7</sup>

## Latino Families Need the Healthy Families Act

The Healthy Families Act is modeled on successful laws that have been adopted in 10 states and more than 20 other jurisdictions.<sup>8</sup> Evidence shows they are working well, without adverse business or economic effects.<sup>9</sup> But Latinos' access to paid sick days should not depend on where they live or work. The Healthy Families Act would set a much-needed national standard.

## Endnotes

- 1 UnidosUS calculations from the National Center for Health Statistics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2017 National Health Interview Survey.
- 2 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. January 18, 2019. Household Data, Annual Averages, Table 13, Employed Hispanic or Latino workers by sex, occupation, class of worker, full- or part-time status, and detailed ethnic group. Accessed March 4, 2019. <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat13.htm>. National Partnership for Women and Families. "Paid Sick Days Improve Public Health." February 2019. Accessed March 1, 2019. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/paid-sick-days/paid-sick-days-improve-our-public-health.pdf>.
- 3 Xia, Jenny, Jeff Hayes, Barbara Gault, and Hailey Nguyen. "Paid Sick Days Access and Usage Rates Vary by Race/Ethnicity, Occupation, and Earnings." Institute for Women's Policy Research. February 17, 2016. Accessed March 4, 2019. <https://iwpr.org/publications/paid-sick-days-access-and-usage-rates-vary-by-raceethnicity-occupation-and-earnings/>
- 4 Gould, Elise, and Jessica Schieder. "Work Sick or Lose Pay?: The High Cost of Being Sick When You Don't Get Paid Sick Days." Economic Policy Institute. June 28, 2017. Accessed March 01, 2019. <https://www.epi.org/publication/work-sick-or-lose-pay-the-high-cost-of-being-sick-when-you-dont-get-paid-sick-days/>.
- 5 National Partnership for Women and Families. "Paid Sick Days Improve Public Health." February 2019. Accessed March 1, 2019. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/paid-sick-days/paid-sick-days-improve-our-public-health.pdf>.
- 6 Smith, Tom W., and Jibum Kim. "Paid Sick Days: Attitudes and Experiences." June 2010. Accessed March 1, 2019. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/paid-sick-days/paid-sick-days-attitudes-and-experiences.pdf>.
- 7 Shepherd-Banigan, Megan. "Mothers' Employment Attributes and Use of Preventive Child Health Services." Medical Care Research and Review 74, no. 2 (2016): 208-26. doi:10.1177/1077558716634555.
- 8 National Partnership for Women & Families. "Current Paid Sick Days Laws." February 2019. Accessed March 4, 2019. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/paid-sick-days/current-paid-sick-days-laws.pdf>.
- 9 Marotta, John, and Solomon Greene. "Paid Sick Days: What Does the Research Tell Us about the Effectiveness of Local Action?" Urban Institute. January 2019. Accessed March 4, 2019. [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99648/paid\\_sick\\_days\\_what\\_does\\_the\\_research\\_tell\\_us\\_about\\_the\\_effectiveness\\_of\\_local\\_action\\_0.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99648/paid_sick_days_what_does_the_research_tell_us_about_the_effectiveness_of_local_action_0.pdf).