



LB 258: Paid Sick and Safe Leave

Nebraska Workers Should Never Be Forced to Choose Between Their Health and Their Next Paycheck

During the largest public health crisis known to us, more than 420,000 Nebraskans have remained exempt from any legal protections to miss even a single day of work when sick.¹

Staying home when sick, without a promise of paid leave, is a privilege many workers simply cannot afford. We must do better than forcing workers in Nebraska to choose between their job, their health and the health of their coworkers.



7 in 10
low-income workers
lack access to even
a single paid sick day.²

This policy is a matter of racial equity for our community, with Black, Indigenous and people of color experiencing disproportionately limited access to paid sick time—54 percent of Latinx workers, 38 percent of Black workers and nearly half of Native workers lack access to even a single day of paid leave.³ These same communities have seen particularly high fatality rates from COVID-19, with the CDC citing limited paid leave as a primary reason for this racial health disparity.⁴

Safe Leave is Critical for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking

Paid safe time allows victims brief time away from work to access critical medical care, legal protections or secure alternative housing in the aftermath of violence.

- **Economic stability is a primary barrier to leaving an abusive relationship.** 99 percent of survivors of domestic violence will experience economic abuse from their harm-doer (controlling one's ability to work, how money is spent, limiting access to bank accounts, accumulating debt in the survivor's name and more).⁵ Without sufficient workplace supports, 50 percent of survivors of sexual assault will experience a loss of employment or be forced to quit in the aftermath of abuse.⁶ Supporting survivors of violence means investing in their economic security, which includes access to paid leave.
- **A lack of paid safe time is dangerous for survivors and workplaces alike.** Offenders feeling a loss of control is the greatest risk factor for escalation of domestic violence, and the time directly following a survivor's decision to leave an offender is the highest-risk time for homicide.⁷ When someone is leaving an abusive relationship, often the one place an abuser knows they can find their victim will be at their job the next day. Safe leave promotes safety for survivors, as well as their workplaces.

LB 258 aligns with the Women's Fund values of: **Equity, Bold Impact and Community Voice.**

To learn more about our mission, vision and values, visit www.OmahaWomensFund.org.



Paid Sick and Safe Time is a Workforce Investment

Currently, if a worker loses their job because of missed work resulting from illness, injury or violence, that turnover is costly for an employer. The employer must invest in a rehiring process—advertising the position, recruiting applicants, reviewing applications and interviewing. When a new employee is hired, an employer must invest in training and navigate the loss in productivity as the new hire adjusts to the learning curve of the position.

Nearly 1 in 4 workers report that they have lost a job or were threatened with job loss for taking time off due to personal or family illness.⁸

Access to paid sick days can reduce the probability of job separation by 25 percent.⁹

Estimates show that companies pay at least one-fifth of an employee's salary to replace them.¹⁰ These costs to an employer far exceed a few days' wages and could be avoided by offering paid sick and safe leave. In a state where employers frequently cite workforce shortages as a primary challenge to their business, the current lack of paid sick and safe leave is unsustainable for employers and workers alike.

¹ This figure reflects those exempt as someone working for an employer with more than 500 employees. "All Nebraska Workers Must Have Paid Sick Days to Open the Economy Safely," National Partnership for Women and Families. <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/economic-justice/frontline-workers/nebraska.html>.

² "National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2018," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (July 2018).

³ Xia, J., Hayes, J., Gault, B., & Nguyen, H. "Paid Sick Days Access and Usage Rates Vary by Race/Ethnicity, Occupation, and Earnings," Institute for Women's Policy Research Publication, (February 2016). <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/B356-paid-sick-days.pdf>.

⁴ "COVID-19 in Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (June 4, 2020). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>.

⁵ "About Financial Abuse," National Network to End Domestic Violence. <https://nnedv.org/content/about-financial-abuse/>.

⁶ Ellis, E.M., Atkeson, B.M., Calhoun, K.D., "An Assessment of Long-term Reaction to Rape," Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 90 np. 3, (1981). <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1981-26031-001>.

⁷ Campbell, J.C., et al. "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multistate Case Control Study," American Journal of Public Health, 93 No. 7, (2003) 1092. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1447915/>.

⁸ Tom W. Smith and Jibum Kim, "Paid Sick Days: Attitudes and Experiences," National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, (June 2010). <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-sick-days/paid-sick-days-attitudes-and-experiences.pdf>.

⁹ Stewart, W.F., Ricci, J.A., Chee, E. Morganstein, D., "Lost Productive Work Time Costs from Health Conditions in the United States: Results from the American Productivity Audit," Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 45, no. 12 (December 2003). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/14665809/>.

¹⁰ Boushey, H. & Glynn, S., "There are Significant Business Costs to Replacing Employees," Center for American Progress, (November 2012). <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2012/11/16/44464/there-are-significant-business-costs-to-replacing-employees/>.