

## Back-to-School Toolkit

### Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

[Article reference] from [date]: Back-to-school season can be challenging every year, but never more so than this fall. Especially for those parents who cannot earn paid sick days, it marks the start of a school year spent worrying about impossible choices between [our/their] jobs and caring for a sick child. More than 30 million workers in this country can't earn a single paid sick day, and a recent survey found that only one in four workers were recently able to take paid time off to be home to care for a child when there was a childcare interruption.

All [state name] parents have faced the dilemma of waking up to a sick child and having to scramble to readjust their schedule. Now with the additional fear of spreading COVID-19 to other students, teachers and staff, it is important for everyone's health that parents have the ability to care for a sick child at home. Yet in [state name/the United States], only [% of workers who were able to take paid time off to be home to care for a child] of workers were recently able to take paid time off to be home to care for a child when there was a childcare interruption. If [our/their] children have COVID-19 symptoms, [we/they] are forced to choose between sending them to school sick or risking [our/their] jobs and financial security by taking unpaid time off.

The situation has real consequences. When children go to school with a cold, a rash, a fever or the flu, illness can spread to their classmates, teachers and staff. This danger is even greater this year as our nation struggles to safely return our children to school while facing the highly contagious Delta variant of COVID-19. That's why the Healthy Families Act – a bill that would establish a national paid sick leave standard – is critical. Parents could care for sick kids and better manage their health, and we could all rest easier knowing that the working parents in our communities have the support they need to care for themselves and their families.

It's time for [members of Congress] to make paid sick days a priority, and this season more than any other should be a reminder of just how important that is for [state name] kids, schools and communities.

Sincerely,

Name

Organization [optional]

Address

City, State

Phone Number

Email Address