

Latinos and Their Families Need Paid Sick Days

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Everyone gets sick, and everyone needs time to recover. Yet 14 million Latino workers in the United States are unable to earn a single paid sick day, forcing them to choose between their health or the health of their families and their economic security when they get sick or need to care for a sick loved one.¹ The inability of most Latinos to earn paid sick days can have devastating consequences. It is past time for a national paid sick days standard that would protect the well-being of Latinos and all working families.

Too Many Latinos are Forced to Choose Between Their Jobs and Their Health or Their Families

Latinos have the highest labor force participation rate of any racial or ethnic group in the United States² and are the fastest-growing segment of the workforce,³ yet they are the least likely to have access to paid sick days.

- ▶ More than half of Latinos – including 55 percent of men and 51 percent of women – are unable to earn a single paid sick day through their jobs.⁴
- ▶ Latinos disproportionately work in occupations in which employers do not provide paid sick days, including food preparation and serving; construction; building and grounds cleaning and maintenance; and production.⁵ When Latinos in these occupations cannot earn paid sick days, they often have no choice but to go to work sick, which puts their health and the health of their co-workers, customers and the public at risk.⁶

“75 percent of Latinos support paid sick days legislation.”

— National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, 2010

Getting sick can have serious economic consequences for Latinos without paid sick days.

- ▶ On average, Latinos are paid less and have less savings and less access to wealth than white workers. More than a quarter (27 percent) of Latino households have no net savings or assets to draw on during an unexpected loss of income.⁷ And, as of 2015, one in five Latino families was living in poverty.⁸ These conditions make it much more difficult to weather a loss of income due to illness or health needs.
- ▶ Just a few days of lost pay is equivalent to losing an entire month’s worth of groceries or health care expenses for a typical family without paid sick days.⁹ Since Latino workers are paid less, on average, than workers overall, a loss of income can add up even more quickly.¹⁰

- ▶ Job loss due to illness is a serious threat to Latino families without paid sick days. Nationally, nearly one in four adults report having lost a job or being told they would lose a job for taking time off due to illness or to care for a sick family member.¹¹

Many Latino workers risk their health because they can't earn paid sick days.

- ▶ Latinos are less likely than their peers to report accessing preventive health services, such as screenings for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers, and have substantially higher mortality rates from diabetes, hypertension and liver disease.¹² Workers without paid sick days are less likely to go to the doctor or access preventive care.¹³
- ▶ Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, 4.2 million previously uninsured Latino adults have gained health coverage.¹⁴ However, in order to fully realize the benefits of health insurance, many Latinos still need job-protected time to seek care.

When Latino parents and caregivers are denied paid sick days, their entire families suffer.

- ▶ Latinos are more likely to have large families than other workers and often have greater caregiving responsibilities.¹⁵ Seventy-five percent of Latinos with children under 18 were in the labor force in 2015,¹⁶ and more than half of Latina mothers (53 percent) are primary breadwinners for their families.¹⁷ These working parents need time to care for their children when they get sick and time to take them for checkups and immunizations to help keep them healthy.¹⁸
- ▶ Latinos are also more likely to have adult caregiving responsibilities than other racial and ethnic groups. More than 20 percent of Latinos serve as caregivers to an adult family member or someone close to them, and on average, Latino caregivers spend about 40 percent more time providing care than white caregivers.¹⁹ Latino family caregivers who are denied paid sick days face additional – and sometimes impossible – barriers to taking time away from work to accompany their loved ones to doctor's appointments, administer medication or deal with a medical emergency.

Latino Workers and Their Families Deserve a Solution

A national paid sick days law would enable millions of working people, including Latinos, to earn job-protected paid sick days. Currently, seven states (Arizona, California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Oregon, Vermont and Washington) and 32 localities have – or will soon have – paid sick days laws in place,²⁰ and a growing body of evidence shows that existing laws are working well.²¹ Latino workers are often at the center of campaigns to pass these laws, joining advocates for workers, women and children, as well as public health experts, to win these important protections.

The Healthy Families Act would set a national paid sick days standard. For businesses with 15 or more employees, the Healthy Families Act would enable workers to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days each year to recover from short-term illness, provide care for a sick family member, access preventive care or seek assistance related to domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. 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. People across the United States – and especially Latinos – should have a fair shot at getting the care they need or caring for a loved one. Learn more at PaidSickDays.org.

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2014, Sex by Age by Employment Status for the Population 16 Years and Over (Hispanic or Latino), Table C23002I*. Retrieved 17 January 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_1YR_C23002I&prodType=table; Xia, J., Hayes, J., Gault, B., & Nguyen, H. (2016, February). *Paid Sick Days Access and Usage Rates Vary by Race/Ethnicity, Occupation, and Earnings*. Institute for Women's Policy Research Publication. Retrieved 17 January 2017, from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/paid-sick-days-access-and-usage-rates-vary-by-race-ethnicity-occupation-and-earnings#sthash.2EEKh9Fj.dpuf> (Unpublished calculation based on the number of Black workers in the civilian labor force multiplied by the percent of employed black workers without paid sick days)
- 2 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2016, February 10). *Table 3. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by age, sex, and race*. Retrieved 26 October 2016, from <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat03.htm>; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2016, February 10). *Table 4. Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by age and sex*. Retrieved 26 October 2016, from <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat04.htm>
- 3 Kochhar, R. (2012). *Labor Force Growth Slows, Hispanic Share Grows*. Pew Research Center Publication. Retrieved 26 October 2016, from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/02/13/labor-force-growth-slows-hispanic-share-grows-2/>
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- 5 Latinos comprise 16.5 percent of the employed civilian population but comprise 25 percent of food preparation and serving workers (19 percent paid sick days access rate); 32 percent of construction and extraction workers (30 percent paid sick days access rate); 36 percent of building and grounds cleaning and maintenance workers (34 percent paid sick days access rate); and 22 percent of production workers (52 percent paid sick days access rate). U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *Table B24010I: Sex by Occupation for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over (Hispanic or Latino)*. Retrieved 26 October 2016, from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_B24010I&prodType=table; U.S. Census Bureau. *Table B24010: Sex by Occupation for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over*. Retrieved 26 October 2016, from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_B24010&prodType=table (Unpublished calculations). For rates of access to paid sick days by occupation, see note 4, Figure 7.
- 6 National Partnership for Women & Families. (2013, April). *Paid Sick Days Improve Our Public Health*. Retrieved 17 January 2017, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/psd/paid-sick-days-improve-our-public-health.pdf>
- 7 Corporation for Enterprise Development. (2016). *Assets & Opportunity Scorecard: Extreme Asset Poverty Rate*. Retrieved 16 August 2016, from <http://scorecard.assetsandopportunity.org/latest/measure/extreme-asset-poverty-rate>
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- 10 Latinas who hold full-time, year-round jobs in the United States are paid, on average, just 54 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men while Latinos are paid just 62 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2015 – People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2015, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex*. Retrieved 26 October 2016, from <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html> (Unpublished calculation based on the median annual wages of white, non-Hispanic men, Latinas and Latinos who worked full time, year-round in 2015)
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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 NationalPartnership.org.

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