

STATEMENTS FROM NATIONAL LEADERS ON THE PASSAGE OF CONNECTICUT'S PAID SICK DAYS LAW

Reflecting the breadth of support for paid sick days, leaders of the following organizations have spoken out on Connecticut becoming the first state in the nation to pass paid sick days legislation.

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| 9to5, National Association of Working Women | Family Values @ Work Consortium | National Council of Negro Women |
| American Association of People with Disabilities | Human Impact Partners | National Domestic Workers Alliance |
| AARP Connecticut | Institute for Women's Policy Research | National Fatherhood Initiative |
| American Association of University Women | Interfaith Worker Justice | National Hispanic Council on Aging |
| AFL-CIO | Labor Project for Working Families | National Partnership for Women & Families |
| American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) | The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights | Service Employees International Union (SEIU) |
| American Public Health Association | Main Street Alliance | Trust for America's Health |
| Business and Professional Women's Foundation | MomsRising | U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce |
| Center for American Progress | National Association of School Nurses | Women of Color Policy Network |
| | National Council of Jewish Women | Women Employed |
| | National Council of La Raza | Working America |

“In America, no one should have to risk their job or paycheck to take care of their health or a sick family member. Today’s win for paid sick days in Connecticut, and campaigns that are gaining momentum across the country, illustrate growing public and lawmaker support for policies that protect the health of workers and their families and reflect today’s economic realities. This growing momentum is good news for our nation’s families and our health.”

◆ **Linda Meric**, Executive Director,
9to5, National Association of Working Women

“American workers should not have to choose between keeping their jobs and attending to medical needs – either their own or those of family members. The American Association of People with Disabilities applauds Connecticut for becoming the first state to adopt paid sick days legislation. Connecticut has taken an important step towards fostering the creation of flexible and inclusive workplaces, which are critical in enabling all workers – especially workers with disabilities – to meet the challenges of the 21st century.”

◆ **Helena Berger**, Acting President and CEO,
American Association of People with Disabilities

“AARP-Connecticut is proud to have supported passage of first-in-the-nation state legislation to provide workers with a minimal amount of paid sick days each year. When such a large segment of the workforce goes to work sick because they can’t afford to stay home, that unnecessarily endangers public health, especially for those with weakened immune systems such as some seniors. Paid sick days are also important for employees who have family caregiving responsibilities. Connecticut’s paid sick days law is an excellent first step toward meeting the needs of caregivers in the workplace.”

◆ **Brenda Kelley**, Senior State Director,
AARP Connecticut

“AAUW applauds Connecticut’s passage of a bill to allow those most in need of paid sick days to earn them fair and square. The new law will be an important first step towards making sure that all working families have access to paid time off to care for themselves or a loved one. AAUW has long believed that ensuring a minimum number of paid sick days isn’t just the right thing to do, it’s the smart thing to do—for families, for business, and for public health.”

◆ **Lisa Maatz**, Director,
Public Policy and Government Relations,
American Association of University Women

“I’m excited to see Connecticut leading the way on national standards around paid sick leave. This is a national conversation that is long overdue. Paid sick leave should be guaranteed for all working men and women regardless of their occupation or what state they live in. It is my hope that Connecticut’s leadership spurs the rest of the country to take action on this important issue.”

◆ **Liz Shuler**, Secretary-Treasurer, **AFL-CIO**

“No one should have their livelihood threatened because they are sick. Yet the millions of workers in this country who do not have paid sick leave face that reality daily. AFSCME congratulates the CT Senate and House for passing a law guaranteeing CT workers paid sick leave. We encourage Governor Malloy to make CT the first state in the country to grant workers this basic right.”

◆ **Gerald McEntee**, President,
**American Federation of State, County and
Municipal Employees (AFSCME)**

“Paid sick leave is essential in building resilient and healthy communities across the country, and I commend Connecticut’s efforts in leading this charge. Many employees without a paid sick leave benefit do not have the financial security necessary to stay home from work when they or a family member are sick. No one should have to choose between work or their health, yet that is what many workers without paid sick days are asked to do. We have made progress in improving our public health system, but we have more work to do. Providing paid sick leave for employees would go a long way to protect America’s health.”

◆ **Georges C. Benjamin, MD**, Executive Director,
American Public Health Association

“BPW Foundation congratulates Connecticut’s state legislature for approving a paid sick days bill and for recognizing how the lack of this benefit has forced millions of Americans to choose between their paychecks and their health, and the health of their families. I am proud that Connecticut will be the first state in the nation to create a paid sick days standard and I hope that this sparks a nationwide momentum for additional States, and Congress, to show their support of paid sick leave. The American family has changed dramatically in the last 50 years and employee benefits should be reflective of the way we live now. This is a momentous step in the right direction.”

◆ **Deborah Frett**, CEO,
Business and Professional Women’s Foundation

“In the state of Connecticut, for the first time, workers will now have the right to earn paid sick days. This is the right policy at the right time. When a worker is ill, they should have the right to stay home and their coworkers will also benefit from a seriously ill person taking time off. When a child gets sick, a parent may need to take time off work because there isn’t another option. Most workers—including mothers—are breadwinners for their families. Paid sick days is the kind of commonsense policy that helps employers respond to the challenges of everyday conflicts between work and family.”

◆ **John Podesta**, President and CEO,
Center for American Progress

“Family Values @ Work is proud of our member group, the Everybody Benefits campaign spearheaded by the Connecticut Working Families Party, for its hard work to make this day happen. In a time of economic hardship, middle class Americans won a victory today. Connecticut legislators stood with working people and voted for a bill that will lead to healthier families and a stronger economy. Across the country, similar coalitions are fighting for paid sick days legislation. We share a vision that taking care of yourself or a loved one should never cost you a paycheck or a job.”

◆ **Ellen Bravo**, Executive Director,
Family Values @ Work Consortium

“We applaud Connecticut for passing statewide paid sick days legislation. This legislation is commonsense policy that protects the health of all people – anyone that eats or works in a restaurant as well as families with children in day care and schools or parents in nursing homes. Congratulations on helping to make Connecticut a healthier place to live. We look forward to victories in more cities and states in the months to come!”

◆ **Jonathan Heller**, Director & Co-Founder,
Human Impact Partners

“Paid sick days make good economic sense. Workers will be able to take better care of their own and their family’s health needs, businesses will benefit from retaining productive and committed workers, and the general public will benefit from reductions in the spread of contagious diseases in schools, hospitals, child care centers, nursing homes, restaurants, and retail stores. IWPR applauds the state of Connecticut for this important step forward, the first state in the nation to recognize the economic value of this common sense approach.”

◆ **Heidi Hartmann**, President,
Institute for Women’s Policy Research

“Interfaith Worker Justice rejoices that soon the people of Connecticut will become the first state in the nation to pass paid sick days legislation. Passage of the bill will ensure that workers will be able to take paid time off to recover when they are sick or to care for a sick family member. The faith communities of Connecticut have been part of a large coalition, including Governor Dan Malloy, who have worked so hard over the years to protect working families. IWJ welcomes this and other common sense workplace policies that protect public health and help working families, businesses, and the economy.”

◆ **Kim Bobo**, Executive Director,
Interfaith Worker Justice

“The passage of paid sick days in Connecticut is a great first step forward in securing this basic right for all workers. No worker should have to go to work sick or make the agonizing choice between a sick child and their job. This common sense policy is good for our families, and good for healthy communities and workplaces.”

◆ **Netsy Firestein**, Executive Director,
Labor Project for Working Families

“Connecticut should be proud of its legislature for providing paid sick days that recognize and respect the dignity of work. This groundbreaking legislation stands for the fundamental principle that no worker should ever be penalized for becoming ill or needing time off to care for a sick family member. The civil and human rights community hopes that other states – including those engaged in destructive efforts to eliminate workers’ rights that helped to build a strong middle class – will take note and follow suit.”

◆ **Wade Henderson**, President and CEO,
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

“Paid sick days standards are not only good for workers, but good for businesses, too. That’s why more and more small businesses in Connecticut, here in New York City, in Philadelphia, and across the country are speaking up to support paid sick days. It’s a way to do good for our workers and do well in our businesses at the same time. It’s also a way to make sure our bigger competitors are treating their workers fairly.”

◆ **Marco Reynoso**,
owner of **Superstar Deli & Grocery** in Brooklyn, NY,
and a leader with **Small Business United**,
a growing coalition of small business owners affiliated with
the national **Main Street Alliance** network

“Connecticut has become a shining example for the nation on paid sick days. MomsRising enthusiastically applauds Connecticut lawmakers for passing *An Act Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees*. Connecticut will now become the first state to require employers to provide their workers with paid sick days. This family-friendly policy is not only good for working families; it’s good for the state’s health and its economy. Now fewer people will get the flu with their hamburgers – and more moms and dads will be able to take care of themselves (and their children) when they get sick, without losing needed pay or even their jobs. Our members delivered thousands of messages and personal stories to legislators. We’re glad their voices were heard.”

◆ **Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner**, Executive Director,
MomsRising

“The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) is proud that Connecticut school nurses rallied to help with the passage of paid sick days legislation. NASN is committed to supporting legislation nationally so that all parents receive paid sick days, allowing them to care for their children without risking their jobs.”

◆ **Sandra Delack**, President,
National Association of School Nurses

“NCJW applauds Connecticut for enacting the nation’s first statewide paid sick days law. Paid sick days are essential to all families, but particularly to victims of domestic violence who often stay with their abusers because they don’t have the financial resources to leave. Sacrificing a paycheck to recover from an illness or care for a sick child can often mean that a woman is less likely to be able to bear the financial burden that comes with leaving an abusive relationship. NCJW is pleased that Connecticut families will no longer be forced to choose between safety and financial security and we urge lawmakers in states across the country – and in our nation’s capital – to follow suit.”

– **Nancy K. Kaufman**, CEO,
National Council of Jewish Women

“This is big for Latino workers, who are the least likely of any group to have access to paid sick leave—leave that we know is a crucial stabilizer for workers struggling to balance the demands of low-wage work with the inevitable health disruptions that all workers face. The Connecticut State Senate’s approval of statewide paid sick leave is one important step toward ensuring workers within all industries and occupations are afforded dignity and respect and are poised to be a true force for growth and prosperity in the American economy.”

◆ **Eric Rodriguez**, Vice President,
Office of Research, Advocacy, and Legislation,
National Council of La Raza

“Congratulations to Connecticut for being a leader on the important issue of expanding access to paid sick leave. In far too many respects, America’s workers are hurting all across the country. This news, however, gives us hope that much brighter days are yet to come.”

◆ **Dr. Avis A. Jones-DeWeever**, Executive Director,
National Council of Negro Women

“The Connecticut paid sick days law is a historic step forward toward the type of policy we need to support the 21st century workforce and a healthy economy. Congratulations to the Connecticut legislature for recognizing the reality of working women and parents today. Taking care of our families and our health is not a choice.”

◆ **Ai-jen Poo**, Executive Director,
National Domestic Workers Alliance

“Connecticut’s paid sick days law is an important step towards helping today’s working dads become more involved in their children’s lives. At a time when 1 out of 3 children live in fatherabsent homes, our society must do all it can to encourage father involvement, and this is one powerful way to do it.”

◆ **Roland C. Warren**, President,
National Fatherhood Initiative

“The National Hispanic Council on Aging lauds the Connecticut legislature for taking a courageous stand and passing the nation’s first statewide paid sick days bill. This bill is a tremendous step forward for the great state of Connecticut, and a model for the rest of the country to follow. Leaves that pay, including paid sick leave, are especially critical for NHCOA’s constituencies—Hispanic older adults, families, and caregivers. As America’s working families work hard to rebuild their futures, this bill represents a common sense approach for both families and public health practices. Data shows businesses stand to lose more when their employees come to work sick, and Hispanics are less likely than any other group to take time off for illnesses and injuries. Furthermore, they are more likely to be employed in jobs that do not offer paid sick leave. These statistics have grave implications for the health of our community and the rest of our country.”

◆ **Dr. Yanira Cruz**, President and CEO,
National Hispanic Council on Aging

“This is a huge and historic victory for workers, and a good day for Connecticut. With Governor Malloy poised to sign the first statewide paid sick days law, hundreds of thousands of workers will no longer have to report to work sick and spread contagion to co-workers and the public. Parents will no longer have to leave sick children home alone or send them to school or daycare. And cash-strapped working families will no longer lose pay – and jeopardize their economic security – when illness strikes. This groundbreaking victory provides momentum to help advance paid sick days measures now being considered by other cities and states. Connecticut is the first to adopt a statewide paid sick days measure, but not the last. We look forward to further progress and urge Congress to make passage of the Healthy Families Act a priority.”

◆ **Debra L. Ness**, President,
National Partnership for Women & Families

“The Connecticut paid sick days bill is a breakthrough for all working families struggling in this economy. It will keep healthy people away from those who are ill, keep workers in their jobs and keep families together in times of need. Parents will no longer have to choose between keeping their job and sending their sick child to day care or school where they place other children and teachers at risk. Connecticut is helping set a pace for progressive reforms that, step-by-step, will improve the lives of America’s middle class.”

◆ **Mary Kay Henry**, International President,
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

“We applaud the Connecticut legislature for passing the first statewide paid sick days law in the nation and urge more states and cities to follow. Paid sick days make public health sense by ensuring workers can comply with science-based guidance to control the spread of an outbreak. They make economic sense because “presenteeism” puts a sick employee’s coworkers and customers at risk for illness and could cripple the operations of a business. And they make fiscal sense because they allow individuals to take sick days to seek preventive or primary care, rather than accessing care through emergency departments.”

◆ **Jeff Levi**, Executive Director,
Trust for America’s Health

“Like the recent debates over health care, equal pay, and financial reform, the debate over paid sick days cannot be painted as a black-and-white struggle between business owners and the labor force. Many business owners already offer paid sick days because it’s the smart thing to do, and support a basic standard because it’s also the right thing to do. Business lobby claims about the negative impacts of such a requirement have been trumped by reality and proven false. We must recognize that we have a 21st century workforce in which women have advanced and families must manage the often competing needs of work and family. Paid sick days are one important tool to help workers balance these needs, as well as to stay healthy and productive. The USWCC is proud to support the Connecticut paid sick days campaign and commends them on the passage of their bill.”

◆ **Margot Dorfman**, Director,
U.S. Women’s Chamber of Commerce

“In a state where 85 percent of low-income children have working parents, Connecticut is on the path to ensuring that all workers regardless of job or occupation have the ability to care for a sick child or ailing family member.”

◆ **C. Nicole Mason**, Executive Director,
Women of Color Policy Network

“Connecticut passing paid sick days is a monumental and historical first step as the first state to enact this desperately needed workplace benefit for all workers. It’s about time! Congratulations to Connecticut workers and their families, employers, and the public, all of whom will benefit. I look forward to the day that Illinois and all states have paid sick days.”

◆ **Melissa Josephs**, Director of Equal Opportunity Policy,
Women Employed

“How did it happen that in America the typical private sector worker has no paid sick leave at all? When our organizers talk to people in their homes, they hear stories of workers harmed by having to work sick, or losing badly needed income or even their job because they don’t have this basic protection. Connecticut is taking an important step in restoring sanity to workplace standards. Working America is proud to be part of the movement around the country that has led to this victory and will continue to expand it elsewhere.”

◆ **Karen Nussbaum**, Executive Director,
Working America