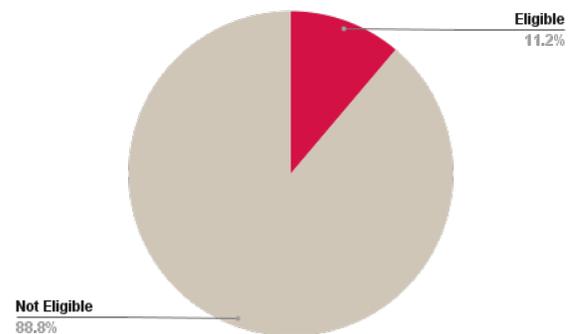


Connecticut Workers Need a Stronger Paid Sick Leave Law

NOVEMBER 2022

In 2011, Connecticut became the first state in the United States to enact a law guaranteeing paid sick time to some workers. Connecticut’s paid sick days law marked a historic step forward for the country and provided vital evidence that paid sick days guarantees are not only feasible for employers but also beneficial to public health. For example, research has found that after implementation of the law, workers in covered occupations experienced a faster decline in occupational injuries and illnesses than other workers in Connecticut and in the same occupations in New York and nationally.¹

But Connecticut’s law only applies to individuals who are employed in specified service occupations and meet several other criteria: To be covered, an individual must be an hourly, non-overtime-exempt employee of an employer with at least 50 employees. To be eligible to use accrued leave, the employee must also have worked an average of ten or more hours per week in the most recent completed calendar quarter. The law also exempts employers in manufacturing industries and certain 501(c)(3) nonprofits that provide recreation, child care and education.²



Our analysis finds that the eligibility restrictions of Connecticut’s law substantially reduce its reach, and likely blunt the positive effects it could have on the health and economic security of Connecticut workers and their families. **We estimate that just 11 percent of employed workers meet criteria to be eligible for paid sick leave.**³ All told, approximately 1.6 million workers in Connecticut are excluded from the law's protections.

Eligible for Paid Sick Days, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity			
	All Employed	Number Eligible	Percent Eligible
All workers	1,822,846	203,830	11.2%
Women	883,345	136,332	15.4%
Asian American and Pacific Islander	85,037	7,892	9.3%

Black	171,910	31,662	18.4%
Latinx/Hispanic	263,230	49,969	19.0%
White	1,266,012	109,053	8.6%
Immigrant	322,605	40,514	12.6%

Source: Author's calculations using American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year estimates using IPUMS.

Exclusions Exacerbate Racial and Gender Inequities

All workers need and benefit from a right to earn and use paid sick days. But for some groups of workers, a lack of legally protected paid sick days exacerbates other inequities they and their families face. Women are less likely than men to have paid time away from work, despite doing more family caregiving on average.⁴ Yet nearly three-quarters of a million women workers in Connecticut are not eligible for paid sick days under the current law. Racism and other forms of discrimination in the labor market and workplace mean that workers of color and immigrant workers are not only less likely to have paid time away from work, but also less likely to have savings to fall back on during unpaid time off, and more likely to experience job loss or retaliation after asking for leave.⁵ Ensuring that all workers are covered by the paid sick leave law is an essential step toward a more racially equitable Connecticut.

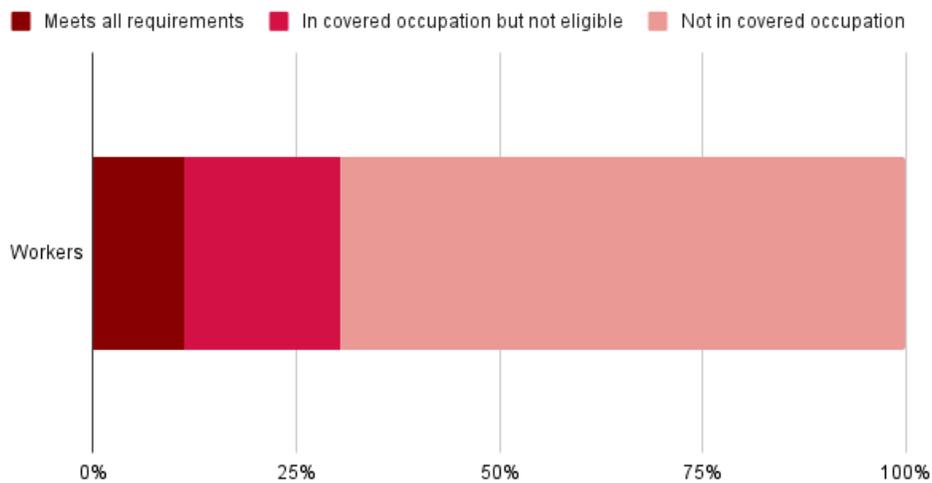
Workers Not Eligible for Paid Sick Days, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity			
	All Employed	Number Not Eligible	Percent Not Eligible
All workers	1,822,846	1,619,016	88.8%
Women	883,345	747,013	84.6%
Asian American and Pacific Islander	85,037	77,145	90.7%
Black	171,910	140,248	81.6%
Latinx/Hispanic	263,230	213,262	81.0%
White	1,266,012	1,156,959	91.4%
Immigrant	322,605	282,091	87.4%

Source: Author's calculations using American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year estimates using IPUMS.

Our analysis found that one of the most limiting aspects of Connecticut's paid sick days law is that eligibility is limited to certain service occupations. This requirement alone excludes nearly three-quarters of Connecticut workers. While women, Black and Latinx

workers are overrepresented in the service occupations the current law targets (see Appendix I) – and so are slightly more likely to be covered than other groups – the occupation requirement still excludes about six in ten women, six in ten Latinx workers, and more than half of Black workers. Furthermore, other eligibility rules combine to exclude nearly two-thirds of workers even within covered occupations.

Workers Excluded by Occupation, Other Requirements



Methodological note: This analysis uses the 2015-2019 American Community Survey accessed via IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org, using a five-year dataset to have a sufficient sample size to analyze state-level data. Racial categories in this analysis exclude individuals who identify as Latinx and/or Hispanic, who are analyzed separately. Eligible workers are defined as those who reported being currently employed and in a covered occupation, excluding those who were self-employed, in a manufacturing industry (NAICS codes 31-33), worked less than 10 hours per week on average in the prior year and had wage income above the 2019 federal overtime salary threshold of \$35,568; this estimate was then reduced by 27 percent, the average share of workers in Connecticut employed by employers with fewer than 50 employees in the industries employing the most service workers. The data source did not allow for the exclusion of employees of exempt 501(c)(3) employers.

Appendix Table I.

Women, Black and Latinx Workers Overrepresented in Service Occupations				
	All Employed	Percent of All Employed	In Covered Occupations	Percent of All in Covered Occupations
All workers	1,822,846		555,730	
Women	883,345	48.5%	356,304	64.1%
Asian American and Pacific Islander	85,037	4.7%	22,345	4.0%
Black	171,910	9.4%	75,813	13.6%
Latinx/Hispanic	263,230	14.4%	104,733	18.8%

White	1,266,012	69.5%	340,025	61.2%
Immigrant	322,605	17.7%	106,232	19.1%

Source: Author's calculations using American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year estimates using IPUMS.

¹ Hawkins, D., & Zhu, J. (2019, July 22). Decline in the rate of occupational injuries and illnesses following the implementation of a paid sick leave law in Connecticut. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 62(10), 859-873. doi: 10.1002/ajim.23028

² CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTE 31-57r through 31-57w – PAID SICK LEAVE. Retrieved 20 November 2022, from <https://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wgwkstnd/SickLeaveLaw.htm>

³ National Partnership for Women & Families analysis of 2014-2019 American Community Survey data. See methodological note.

⁴ National Partnership for Women & Families. (2021, May). *Women Carried the Burden of Unpaid Caregiving in 2020*. Retrieved 20 November 2022, from <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/women-carried-the-burden-of-unpaid-caregiving-in-2020.pdf>

⁵ Mason, J. & Molina Acosta, P. (2021, March). *Called to Care: A Racially Just Recovery Demands Paid Family and Medical Leave*. Retrieved 20 November 2022, from <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/economic-justice/reports/called-to-care-a-racially-just-demands-paid-family-and-medical-leave.html>

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at NationalPartnership.org.

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