

Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence Need Paid Safe Days

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Incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking are tragically common, yet our nation's workplace policies do not reflect this reality. Nearly 20 million people experience domestic violence, sexual violence or stalking by intimate partners every year in the United States.¹ Each year, nearly 1,300 women die from intimate partner violence and nearly two million are injured.² **A national paid sick and safe days standard would help provide victims and survivors the support and job stability they need to escape and address violence.**

Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking Disproportionately Impact Some Groups

Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking are common and span race, ethnicity, gender identity, socioeconomic status and more, but survivors in marginalized and underserved communities often face intersecting forms of discrimination that exacerbate their likelihood of facing economic instability.

- Nearly 1 in 3 women will experience physical violence and nearly half will experience psychological violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes.³ Even starker, the majority or near majority of Native women, multi-racial women and Black women will experience physical or psychological violence at some point in their lives.⁴
- Forty-four percent of lesbian women, 61 percent of bisexual women, and nearly 4 in 10 bisexual men experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetimes.⁵ More than half of transgender people report experiencing some form of intimate partner violence.⁶
- People with disabilities are at least three times as likely to experience rape or sexual assault as those without, and rates may be even higher for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.⁷
- Women living in poverty experience domestic violence at twice the rate of those who do not, and the abuse perpetrated against them can make it impossible to find economic stability.⁸
- Workers who are paid low wages often do not have the time or money to access medical care, contact the appropriate authorities or obtain a protective order when they experience violence.⁹ Fewer than 3 in 10 private sector workers who are paid

under \$11 an hour have access to paid sick days, and less than half have access to paid vacation days.¹⁰

- Children who have experienced sexual assault or violence need additional assistance from their parents to get medical care, attend court appointments and navigate the justice system. This support is critical because experiencing violence in adolescence can have serious long-term negative effects on future careers and economic security.¹¹

Financial Stability Is Critical for Survivors

The financial pressures and reverberations associated with domestic and sexual violence or stalking can affect survivors' ability to escape abuse and seek assistance.

- Including medical costs, lost productivity, criminal justice expenses and more, the lifetime cost of intimate partner violence is high, estimated at more than \$100,000 per female victim and \$23,000 for male victims.¹² The lifetime economic cost of medical services for related injuries, lost productivity from paid work, criminal justice and other costs, was \$3.6 trillion to the U.S. economy.
- The economic effects of domestic violence are multifaceted, impacting survivors in far-reaching, and often long-lasting, ways. Two-thirds of survivors reported that an abusive partner had impacted their ability to complete education or training, limiting future opportunities for career and financial growth.¹³ Seventeen percent of survivors reported dropping out of job training as a result of abuse.¹⁴
- Job loss can be particularly devastating for domestic violence survivors because they need financial security to ensure their safety and the safety of children. Survivors often stay with their abusers due to economic dependence, sometimes as a result of the economic abuse their spouses or partners inflict by withholding and stealing wages, ruining credit scores and even bankrupting their victims.¹⁵
- Survivors seeking safety or medical treatment often incur increased financial expenses. Nearly 3 in 10 stalking victims incur out-of-pocket costs from attorney fees, replacing or repairing damage to property, child care, and moving or changing phone numbers.¹⁶ And according to one study, health care costs for women experiencing physical abuse are 42 percent higher than for women not experiencing abuse.¹⁷

Job Security is Critical for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking

The effects of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking often extend to a survivor's work life, and without supportive policies, can make leaving an abusive situation and seeking assistance even more difficult.

- On average, a domestic violence survivor experiences 7.2 days of work-related lost productivity.¹⁸ Women with low incomes who experience intimate partner violence work, on average, three months fewer than women who do not experience intimate partner violence, which can negatively affect long-term job stability and economic well-being.¹⁹
- In one survey, 83 percent of domestic violence survivors reported their ability to work was negatively impacted by an abusive partner, including missed raises or promotions, missing days of work, or losing a job.²⁰ Seventy-nine percent of victims experiencing abusive behavior that affected their work reported being late to work because of interference from abusers.²¹
- Nearly 10 percent of stalking victims are forced to change or quit their jobs, or leave school to keep themselves safe and stop the behavior.²²
- Survivors of domestic violence are at an increased risk of harm during and shortly after separating from an abusive partner.²³ It is essential that they are able to continue working while securing housing, attending court dates, and visiting health professionals.

A National Paid Safe Days Standard Would Provide Some of the Support Survivors Need

Paid sick and safe days help survivors of violence access critical services without risking their financial security. Nationwide, 10 states and dozens of cities and counties have passed laws that provide domestic violence survivors with paid or unpaid safe time specifically to address legal, medical and psychological issues that result from abuse, but access to this important protection shouldn't depend on geography.²⁴

A national paid sick and safe days law – such as the Healthy Families Act (H.R. 1784/S. 840) – would ensure all survivors have a legal right to time away from work to seek assistance. The bill would allow workers in businesses with 15 or more employees to earn up to seven paid sick and safe days a year to care for their own health or that of their family members; workers in smaller businesses would earn up to seven job-protected *unpaid* sick and safe days. Safe time could be used to allow survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking to earn time to recover from or seek assistance related to the violence and to allow family members of survivors to support their loved ones in seeking care or services.

¹ Breiding, M. J., Smith, S. G., Basile, K. C., Walters, M. L., Chen, J., Merrick, M. T. (2014, September 5). Prevalence and characteristics of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence victimization — National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 63(SS08), 1-18 (Table 6). Retrieved 10 October 2019, from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6308a1.htm#Table6> (Unpublished calculation based on total 12-month prevalence of “contact sexual violence,” physical violence and stalking estimated number of victims for both men and women.)

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- ² U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2003, March). *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States* (pp. 19). Retrieved 10 October 2019, from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipvbook-a.pdf>
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- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ U.S. Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Division of Violence Prevention. (2010). *NISVS: An Overview of 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation*. Retrieved 18 October 2019, from https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cdc_nisvs_victimization_final-a.pdf
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- ⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2017, July). *Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009-2015 - Statistical Tables*. Retrieved 10 October 2019, from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/capd0915st.pdf>
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- ⁹ Lyon, E. (2000, October). *Welfare, Poverty and Abused Women: New Research and Its Implications*. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence Publication. Retrieved 10 October 2019, from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.208.7541&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
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- ¹⁸ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2003). *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States*. Retrieved 10 October 2019, from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipvbook-a.pdf>
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²¹ Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2017, August). *The Economic Cost of Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*. Retrieved 10 October 2019, from https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/B367_Economic-Impacts-of-IPV-08.14.17.pdf

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