

# FACT SHEET



**Virginians for  
Paid Sick Days**

VAPAIDSICKDAYS.ORG

## Support paid sick days for Virginia essential workers

### **HB 997- Guzman**

### **HB 1160- Mundon-King**

**Problem:** Approximately 41 percent of private sector workers, **1.2 million workers in Virginia, have no paid sick days**, including two-thirds of grocery store workers and one in four healthcare workers. This creates a crisis for workers who must choose between taking a sick day for themselves or their children and getting paid. Workers who go to work sick endanger their co-workers, the public and the ability of the business to remain open.

**Policy solution:** In 2021, the General Assembly passed a bill to provide paid sick days to 30,000 consumer-directed home healthcare workers. In 2022, the Virginians for Paid Sick Days Coalition seeks to expand coverage to additional essential workers in the healthcare and grocery store sectors. HB 997 (Guzman) expands current paid sick day coverage to include agency-directed home healthcare workers. HB 1160 (Mundon-King) is a bill that allows both part-time and full-time grocery store and healthcare workers to earn up to five paid sick days (40 hrs) each year. PTO policies that allow workers to take time to care for themselves or sick family members meet the bill requirements.

**Who benefits:** Almost everyone benefits from a paid sick day standard, which is why 88 percent of Virginia registered voters support a paid sick day standard. Strong majorities of Democrats (96 percent), Independents (78 percent) and Republicans (72 percent) across all regions in the Commonwealth support a paid sick day standard. Paid sick days help:

**Businesses** - Employers lose \$160 billion annually in productivity due to “presenteeism” - coming to work

despite illness or injury. Providing paid sick days results in reduced turnover – saving businesses money.

**Workers and their families** - When a worker takes 3.5 unpaid sick days, the average family loses a month’s worth of groceries. Workers must choose between feeding their families and caring for themselves or their children.

**Schools** - Parents who don’t have paid sick days are more than twice as likely to send their children to school sick than parents who have paid sick days. Sick children can’t learn and spread germs to children and teachers.

**Public health** – Workers in certain industries are the least likely to have paid sick days. More than half of all Norovirus outbreaks can be traced back to sick food service workers who were forced to choose between working sick and losing pay or their job. An October 2020 report in *Health Affairs* showed that the paid sick leave provision of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) reduced the spread of coronavirus. Researchers called paid sick days “a highly effective tool to flatten the curve.”

**People of color** – In the US, about 38 percent of African Americans and 50 percent of Latinos do not have access to a single paid sick day. More than 25 percent of Latino households and 30 percent of African American households have no savings and cannot afford to take unpaid time off from work.

**Other states:** Sixteen states have already passed paid sick day standards. Many of them rank higher than Virginia in overall health.

*Sources: Family Values @ Work, National Partnership for Women & Families, United Health Foundation, U.S Bureau of Labor & Statistics, YouGov American poll*

*Virginians for Paid Sick Days is a coalition of organizations fighting to establish a paid sick day standard that keeps Virginians healthy and keeps our economy running.*