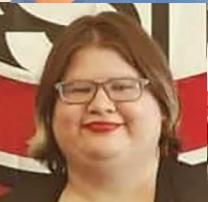


FAMILY
VALUES
@ WORK



Faces of the
**PAID SICK DAYS
MOVEMENT**



The baby needs vaccinations.

A child has an ear infection.

A parent needs a stress test.

School is closed because of a virus.

You need to seek shelter or a
restraining order.

You get the flu.

Everyone at some time needs paid sick
or safe days and many have none.

We're on the brink of change.

Be a champion to value all care,
every family.



Get The Facts

familyvaluesatwork.org/facts



**FAMILY
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MOVEMENT**

familyvaluesatwork.org

Everyone needs time to heal or care for a child with a stomach bug or bad cold. Staying home means we'll get better sooner and not spread germs. Timely doctor's visits can prevent a serious disease. Yet 7 in 10 low-paid workers, and nearly 1 in 3 overall, don't have a single paid sick day. Following doctor's orders can mean lost pay and lost jobs.

The faces in this booklet represent a sampling of those without access to sick time. They are all determined to win a national paid sick days policy that will protect every worker in the U.S.

As the world braces for what might become a coronavirus pandemic, we are reminded that this nation will only be as healthy as our most vulnerable and least-cared for. We need action now to protect the public health.

Each of these individuals is a leader in one of the state coalitions that make up Family Values @ Work.

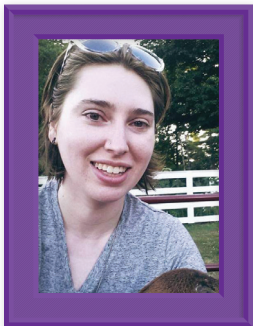
Faces of the **PAID SICK DAYS MOVEMENT**

Leighann Gillis

Westbrook, Maine

Southern Maine Workers' Center

As an in-home care provider, having paid sick days is pretty uncommon. I work with people who are especially susceptible to things like the coronavirus. Because of the work I do - I'm dressing people, giving them their medications, brushing their teeth - I'm intimately in their space all the time.



I have some paid time off, but I have to use that for everything - vacation, my own sickness, and to care for my parents after their surgeries. Since Maine is an at-will employment state, I have to be careful about how much time I take because I could lose my job if my employer thinks I take too much. Having paid sick time would give me the security I need to know if I get sick, I'll still have a job and be able to protect the people I work for.

"Having paid sick time would give me the security I need to know if I get sick, I'll still have a job..."

Faces of the PAID SICK DAYS MOVEMENT

Raye Perez

St. Cloud, MN | Take Action Minnesota

I'm a Social Studies Education student at St. Cloud State University, the oldest of 5 children, part of the LGBTQ community and half Mexican. My younger brother has asthma. When he was little, I often had to stay home when his allergies were acting up because



neither of my parents had sick time. While taking college-level courses, I was getting berated by my teachers for missing school. My parents did the best they could but were left with a hard choice, like many parents, because we do not have systems in place to support parents and children.

"My younger brother has asthma... I often had to stay home when his allergies were acting up because neither of my parents had sick time."

I now work two jobs, one in childcare and one in retail. I don't have sick time in either. If you think working with little kids is hard, try doing it when you've lost your voice and are fatigued. I'm worried about getting someone else sick because I can't lose pay by calling in.

Faces of the **PAID SICK DAYS MOVEMENT**

Juan Jose Dircio

Los Angeles, California | Restaurant Opportunities Center of Los Angeles ROC-LA

I've been working in restaurants for a while. If you had the flu, you came back and no one said, "We're going to pay you for those days." Many times I went to work sick because I needed to work. I have family to take care of, and rent is really high.



"Now if I'm sick, I call in. When I come back, I fill in a form and I get paid. I think it's the best thing because I don't want to spread germs. In restaurants, we work with people."

Even after the law was passed, I worked at an Italian restaurant where they didn't offer any pay for sick days. Then we talked to people at the Restaurant Opportunities Center, learned our rights and told the employer. They didn't like it but they had to pay us.

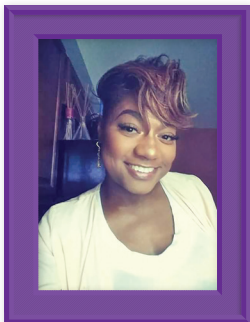
Now if I'm sick, I call in. When I come back, I fill in a form and I get paid. I think it's the best thing because I don't want to spread germs. In restaurants,

Faces of the PAID SICK DAYS MOVEMENT

Christina Hayes

Detroit, Michigan | Mothering Justice

Over a decade ago, I was diagnosed with lupus, a chronic autoimmune disease that affects nearly 1.5 million Americans. Proper treatment included getting blood drawn every two weeks, infusions and follow-up doctor appointments. Adding to my stress was the lack of enough paid time to ensure I could get the care I needed.



"I quickly used up days that were supposed to be for vacation. This led to write-ups that put me on the brink of losing my job."

I quickly used up days that were supposed to be for vacation. This led to write-ups that put me on the brink of losing my job. The bills for treatment kept coming, so I had no choice but to miss blood draws and treatments. Ultimately, my illness made the choice for me and I had to leave the job I had invested years and energy in after I passed out at work.

My experience led me to become an activist with Mothering Justice to win earned paid sick time for everyone.

Faces of the PAID SICK DAYS MOVEMENT

Margaret Toman

Raleigh, NC | NC Justice Center

For 16 years I took care of my mother, who had Alzheimer's disease. When unexpected emergencies arrived, I sometimes had to leave work to take



my mother to a doctor or hospital. Sometimes I would arrive at work having been up all night, providing care. My financial burden was aggravated by the resentment of my supervisor. I knew that no matter how hard I worked or how well I did, it was just a matter of time before she would find a way to fire me. I worked through many lunch hours trying to prove my dedication. She did fire me. I know that the real reason was the capricious and unexpected demands of caregiving, which she felt was not an employer's responsibility to support.

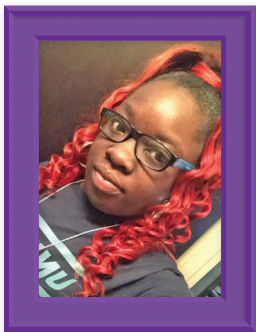
"I knew that no matter how hard I worked or how well I did, it was just a matter of time before she would find a way to fire me."

Faces of the PAID SICK DAYS MOVEMENT

Shanavia Jenkins

North Charleston, SC | United for Respect

I worked at Walmart for three years. Walmart's lack of a good sick time policy caused me to rack up points for missing or having to leave work early because I have severe asthma. The last instance took place in the back storage room. Due to the high dust level, I started wheezing and gasping for breath. Later that day I had to be rushed to the ER. My mother also worked at Walmart but was not allowed to go with me.



"I asked for my absences to be excused and my points reversed, but I was denied."

I came back to work that same day but had to leave again because I was still having trouble breathing. The next day I came in only to have to leave again. I asked for my absences to be excused and my points reversed, but I was denied. If my state or my company offered a better policy around sick time, I would still have a job today.

Faces of the **PAID SICK DAYS MOVEMENT**

Marie Uwamahoro

Portland, Maine

Southern Maine Workers' Center

I am a single mother of 4, working as a direct support professional in the greater Portland area. When I am sick I have to take time off without pay. As an immigrant there is an even larger community that I support, my mother and sister, who still live in Rwanda. When I can't send them money, my sickness contributes to their suffering.



"When I am sick I have to take time off without pay. As an immigrant there is an even larger community that I support, my mother and sister, who still live in Rwanda."

When you work as a direct support professional, you are not seen as a whole being. I worked as a CNA and when I told them I was sick, they didn't believe me. They did not wish me a quick recovery. I wound up leaving to find another job, which was a hard choice because of the strong bonds I had with my clients. If they had treated me with kindness and respect, I would have been motivated to stay and do my best work.

Faces of the **PAID SICK DAYS MOVEMENT**

Deneishia Jacobpito

Las Vegas, NV | Make It Work Nevada

Not having paid sick days took my uterus and my ability to have children. In my twenties and thirties, I progressed from working three retail jobs to earning my graduate degree. None of my jobs offered paid sick days. Doctor's offices did not offer appointments on the weekend. A day's pay was the difference between having groceries or making rent.



"No paid time cost me my family legacy as I am the last of my line, all because I wanted to pay rent and eat."

For years I lived with horrible pain each month. Finally, at 43, I received a full-time job with paid sick days. I finally learned the pain was endometriosis and fibroid cysts. I thought it was just not "meant to be" for me to have children. However, my doctor informed me that had I taken care of the fibroids in my twenties or thirties, I could have had healthy children.

No paid time cost me my family legacy as I am the last of my line, all because I wanted to pay rent and eat.

Faces of the **PAID SICK DAYS MOVEMENT**

Devin Helmick

St. Cloud, MN | Take Action Minnesota

I worked in a bakery for a major retail chain for a while. When working with food, you're not supposed to be sick. However, this chain punishes you for taking days off due to illness, and we had no paid sick time available. I



knew several co-workers who have gone into work sick because they couldn't sustain the loss of income. But I didn't blame my coworkers; we were all strapped for cash and facing cuts to our hours. This was and is bad for everyone involved.

I faced discipline for missing too many days of work due to illness and the dangerous weather. We all need affordable, accessible health care, and also policies that support us using our health care. I shouldn't have had to choose between the care I needed and losing income, or worse, losing my job. Neither should anyone else.

"I faced discipline for missing too many days of work due to illness and the dangerous weather."

Faces of the PAID SICK DAYS MOVEMENT

Herminia Mendoza

Austin, Texas | Workers Defense Project

I've been working at a restaurant for over 20 years.

I've never earned paid sick time or any other type of leave. Once I got really sick from a



kidney infection and had to be taken to the hospital; I was there for two days in excruciating pain – I still struggle with kidney problems. While I was out, I feared I was going to lose my job. Losing two days of work really had an impact on my ability to pay my utilities and to provide for my family.

On multiple occasions, myself or my coworkers have had to work with stomach illnesses. This is very concerning because we handle food every day and have to go to work sick because we have no other option.

"While I was out, I feared I was going to lose my job. Losing two days of work really had an impact on my ability to pay my utilities and to provide for my family."

Thank you for help with this booklet:

Make It Work Nevada

Mothering Justice

NC Justice Center

Restaurant Opportunities Center
of Los Angeles ROC-LA

Southern Maine Workers' Center

Take Action Minnesota

United For Respect

Workers Defense Project

Ellen Bravo

Suzette Gardner

Jennifer Morales

Safiya Simmons

Design by Nidia Mikkonen



familyvalues@work.org