

Healthy Working Families Act Allows 700,000 Marylanders to Earn Sick Days

Each time they get sick or need to care for a sick child, about 750,000 working Marylanders are still forced to choose between their health and a day’s pay. Some may even lose their jobs for missing a shift to see a doctor or care for a loved one. In April, the Maryland General Assembly passed a statewide earned sick days law that covers as many people as possible while also providing some reasonable provisions to accommodate small businesses.

However, Gov. Larry Hogan has not yet decided whether to sign the bill, veto it, or allow it to go into law without his signature. He must make his decision by the end of May.

The Healthy Working Families Act will provide earned sick days to about 488,000 Marylanders who currently must take unpaid time off when they or a loved one gets sick, after taking into account the amendments made during the legislative process. The bill, which passed the General Assembly with enough votes to override the governor’s veto, also extends important job protections to thousands of additional employees at small businesses.

Healthy Working Families Act (HB 1/SB 230)
Applies to businesses with 15 or more employees
Guarantees earned sick leave for about 488,000 Maryland workers who currently can’t earn sick days ⁱ
Ensures that an additional 216,000 workers at small businesses are guaranteed unpaid sick leave without putting their jobs at risk.

Signing strong earned sick days legislation into law will benefit all Marylanders. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that a healthier workforce leads to greater worker productivity due both to workers recovering faster when they stay home and the reduced spread of illness in the workplace – a good thing for our economy. Gov. Hogan should sign the bill for the benefit of thousands of Maryland families, and the state’s economy.

ⁱ Institute for Women’s Policy Research analysis of 2014 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and 2014 IPUMS American Community Survey (ACS), adjusted for amendments by MDCEP.