

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces legislation to guarantee paid sick leave to American workers

Posted on Friday, Feb 13, 2026

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) announced she joined her colleagues in introducing the *Healthy Families Act*, legislation that would guarantee all American workers paid sick leave. The bill would ensure that every American worker has up to seven paid sick days each year, to be used to recover from their own illnesses or care for a child or family member.

“At a time when Wisconsin families are already squeezed by rising costs, the last thing they should have to worry about is having to choose between caring for themselves or a loved one and earning a paycheck,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “Every Wisconsin worker deserves the dignity and security knowing that if they, or their child gets sick, they can do the right thing and stay home and not put their livelihood in jeopardy.”

The U.S. today remains the only major country in the world that does not provide paid time off for short-term illnesses. Currently, [nearly 27 million workers](#) lack any paid sick time entirely, including [20%](#) of the private sector workforce and [7%](#) of the public sector workforce. Things are worse for low-income workers and households, with just [58%](#) of low-income, private-sector workers able to access paid sick days. Without guaranteed paid sick leave, workers are forced to make untenable choices between getting a paycheck and keeping their jobs on the one hand and caring for their own and their family’s health on the other.

Workers without paid sick leave are three times more likely to delay or forgo necessary health care for themselves and nearly twice as likely to forgo medical care for their families compared to working adults with paid sick days. However,

workers with access to paid sick leave are [28%](#) less likely to suffer nonfatal occupational injuries, and employers who provide paid sick leave see [25%](#) less turnover in their workforce. According to a study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, a universal paid sick days policy would reduce preventable visits to the emergency room and result in cost savings of [\\$1.1 billion](#) per year, including \$500 million in savings for public health insurance programs like Medicare and Medicaid.

The *Healthy Families Act* would:

- **Guarantee every worker in America up to seven paid sick days each year**, to be used to recover from their own illnesses, access preventive care, provide care to a sick family member or attend school meetings related to a child's health condition or disability.
- **Simplify how employers calculate paid sick leave.** Workers would earn a minimum of one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to a minimum of 56 hours per year.
- **Allow employers to use their existing policies if they exceed minimum standards.**
- Allow victims of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault to use their paid sick days to recover or seek assistance.

The *Healthy Families Act* is endorsed by [88 organizations](#), including AFL-CIO, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), United Auto Workers (UAW), Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA), National Nurses United (NNU), International Association of Machinists (IAM), Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division-International Brotherhood of Teamsters (BMWED-IBT), Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen-International Brotherhood of Teamsters (BLET-IBT), the Teamsters Rail Conference, Transport Workers Union (TWU), Communications Workers of America (CWA), United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), National Partnership for Women & Families, A Better Balance.

This legislation is led by Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT).

Full text of this legislation is available [here](#).

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