I’m Marilyn Watkins of EOI.

Together these 3 bills strengthen our state economy, not only in the short run by boosting family incomes, but also long term by helping people keep their jobs. Every time someone loses a job, they are at much higher risk of depleting assets, potentially losing their home, needing public assistance, and reducing future retirement income.

Without government enacted standards, 40% of US workers don’t get a single day of paid sick leave. Among workers with the lowest 10% of pay, only 20% are voluntarily offered sick leave by employers. They must choose between keeping needed income and going to work sick.

Passing paid sick days will both improve the health of Washington’s children, and help close the achievement and dropout gaps for low income kids and children of color.

Nearly 2/3 of kids who qualify for free or reduced price lunch have parents with no sick leave. That means those kids are more likely go to school sick, less likely to have health conditions like asthma treated, more often have to miss school to care for sick younger siblings.

Paid sick leave also makes workplaces safer, saving in the workers’ comp system. Researchers from the CDC found workers without paid sick days are 28% more likely to suffer non-fatal workplace injuries.

Paid sick leave standards have now been passed in nearly 20 cities and 3 states. There is no evidence from any source using generally accepted social science methodologies that business or job growth has suffered in any of the jurisdictions with sick leave laws.

According to the University of Washington study of Seattle’s law, job growth has been stronger in Seattle than in the surrounding cities since the ordinance was implemented, while provision of sick leave in restaurants increased from 14% of employers to 78%.
House Bill 1356 establishes proven standards that we know work to protect public health, family economic security, and business prosperity. Please pass all 3 of these bills.