PAID SICK DAYS AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Paid sick days help make all jobs economy-building jobs

- No one should be forced to work sick or when they have a sick child – and most families can’t afford to lose several days’ pay when a nasty virus strikes.
- Working families spend more at local businesses when they have stable income to cover the basics of housing, food, car repair, school supplies – and to afford the occasional evening out.
- More than 20 cities and 4 states have sick leave laws, and data show economic growth continuing. Seattle job and business growth have been stronger than in surrounding cities since sick leave passed.

Healthier employees are better workers

- Sick workers make a bad impression on customers, are prone to making mistakes, and can infect their coworkers – costing the business more than if they just stayed home.
- A recent CDC study finds workers with Paid Sick Days are 28% less likely to be injured at work.
- People recover more quickly when they stay home. Sick leave also lets employees schedule doctor’s visits, so conditions are treated early with fewer complications.

Small business owners have supported paid sick days campaigns in many cities – including Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, and Portland.

- One year after Seattle’s sick leave law went into effect, a University of Washington survey of local businesses found that 70% of business owners supported the ordinance. Surveys elsewhere, including Connecticut and San Francisco, have shown similar levels of business support.
- Many Seattle business owners support a statewide law and have implemented sick leave for employees outside Seattle, too.

Most businesses find the costs of sick leave are less than expected – and outweighed by the benefits

- Studies consistently find that sick leave results in higher morale and productivity, and lower rates of costly employee turnover. Seattle and San Francisco business surveys found that employers frequently find ways to avoid hiring replacements for short term absences.
- Most people don’t use all their sick leave. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that workers who earn 8 days annually of sick leave only use on average 4 days per year.
- Many Seattle business owners found the direct costs of implementing sick leave much lower than they expected, and most were able to avoid raising prices or cutting back in other ways.

Flexibility

- The proposed initiative will include flexibility for businesses, including allowing leave to be offered as PTO (combining sick leave and vacation) and alternative accrual methods, such as front loading.