

# Building a Family-Friendly Minnesota



## Earned Sick and Safe Time Fact Sheet (HF 7/SF 29)

### In Minnesota, every working person deserves paid time to care.

No matter where we live, Minnesotans are united by the aspirations we share and the love we have for our families. But too many hardworking people are being left behind and forced to make impossible choices. We can emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic stronger by building a family-friendly Minnesota that works for all of us. It's time to pass paid time to care.

#### WHAT IS EARNED SICK AND SAFE TIME (ESST)?

**When is it used?** ESST ensures working people have paid time to care for themselves or a loved one. It protects a parent from getting fired if, for example, their child gets sick during the middle of a shift.

Examples include:

- Recovering from the flu
- Getting a COVID-19 test
- Caring for your child when there is an unexpected school closure
- Going to a medical appointment
- Picking your child up from the school nurse's office
- Getting care and assistance after domestic assault, stalking, or sexual assault

**How much paid time to care is provided?** 48 hours can be accrued per year and carried over.

**How are they paid for?** Employees accrue hours that are paid by the employer.

#### EARNED SICK AND SAFE TIME IS MORE CRITICAL THAN EVER

Current employment standards do not reflect the reality Minnesota families encounter daily. Workers get sick and their family members get sick. Caring for yourself and family members is essential to living a good life and being able to work with dignity. We know from the COVID-19 pandemic that all of our health is connected.

- **In 2016, over 900,000 working people in Minnesota didn't have job-protected hours to care for themselves or a loved one.**<sup>1</sup> All of us are hurt when parents send sick kids to daycare because they can't stay home, or when employees show up to work sick.
- **Lack of paid time to care disproportionately affects low-wage workers, and Black, Asian, and Hispanic workers.**<sup>2</sup> Statewide ESST is a matter of equity for all working families.

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2018, July). Update Memorandum on Access to Paid Sick Days by Place of Work in Minnesota. Claudia Williams and Jessica Milli.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

- **Statewide paid sick time laws have already passed in thirteen states and Washington, D.C.**<sup>3</sup> Minnesota needs to catch up to the growing trend and ensure that families across our state have access to paid time to care.
- **ESST has already passed in three cities in Minnesota—St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Duluth.** A statewide policy would ensure that all Minnesotans have the same access to care.
- **ESST helps level the playing field across businesses by allowing small businesses to provide competitive benefits while supporting work with dignity**—which is good for employee retention and productivity<sup>4</sup>, and good for business.

ESST is good for working people and our communities. It upholds the dignity of Minnesota workers, and protects people from losing their jobs or facing workplace discipline when they need time to care.

## HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE (PFML)?

Earned Sick and Safe Time and Paid Family & Medical Leave meet different needs for working families. ESST allows workers to take care of themselves and their families through day-to-day illnesses, emergencies, and snow-days. PFML provides for extended absences for major life events.

- ESST allows workers to accrue 48 hours of paid time to care per year. PFML provides 12 weeks per year of family leave and 12 weeks of medical leave.
- ESST covers short-term care in the form of hours or days of paid time to care when we get the flu for a couple days or need to take a loved one to the doctor.
- PFML establishes a state-administered insurance program. It covers longer term life events that affect all of us at some point, like bonding with a new child or supporting a loved one at the end of their life.

Both ensure that working people have paid time to care—they're two sides of the same coin with different purposes. Together they ensure working Minnesotans have paid time to care.

## HOW IS ESST (HF 7) DIFFERENT FROM EMERGENCY LEAVE FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS (HF 41)?

HF 41 (Frazier) is specifically designed to ensure that essential workers can take paid leave in situations related to COVID. This legislation is tailored to the pandemic in particular, and would expire soon after the end of the Governor's peacetime executive order related to COVID.

ESST ensures that all working families can take paid time to care for the illnesses, doctor's visits, and school closures that are an ongoing part of normal life, during and beyond the current pandemic.

## HOW DOES ESST SUPPORT A FAMILY-FRIENDLY MINNESOTA?

Workers without ESST have an impossible choice: either go to work when they or a loved one need care, or stay home, lose pay, and risk job loss or workplace discipline. ESST makes paid time to care equitable, so that everyone, whether we're white, Black, or brown—can care for ourselves and our loved ones. And it ensures hardworking people have the flexibility they need to meet their most important responsibilities without missing a paycheck or getting fired.

**Together, we can build a family-friendly state where all Minnesotans can live dignified, healthy, and abundant lives.**

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<sup>3</sup> A Better Balance. (2020, October). Overview of Paid Sick Time Laws in the United States. Retrieved 2021 January 27 from <https://www.abetterbalance.org/paid-sick-time-laws/?export>

<sup>4</sup> Stewart, W., Ricci, J.A., Chee, E., et al. (2003, December). Lost productive health time costs from health conditions in the United States: Results from the American Productivity Audit. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 45(12), 1234-1246. Retrieved 7 February 2019 from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/paid-sick-days/lost-productive-work-time-american-productivity-audit.pdf>.