



RE: HB1988, Paid Sick Leave

We are writing on behalf of the 1,000 members of the American Association of University Women (AAUW-VA) to urge you to support HB1988, Paid Sick Leave, sponsored by Delegate Elizabeth Guzman.

Paid sick days legislation is critical to Virginia's economic rebound and stopping the spread of the COVID-19 delta strain. Virginia legislators should pass paid sick days this upcoming session to keep people safe and keep our businesses and schools open.

Paid sick days enable people to stay home when they're sick, preventing the spread of infections and substantial impacts on businesses. Businesses will also benefit from higher employee productivity, healthier workplaces, and lower employee turnover. Studies show that employees working while sick cost American businesses approximately \$160 billion per year—and that was before COVID-19.

Last year, Virginia's legislature passed the first paid sick days law, providing protection for 30,000 home health workers. In 2022, it's time for the legislature to build on that momentum and provide paid sick days to 1.2 million Virginians who do not have them. This includes 81% of restaurant workers and 75% of childcare workers. Without paid sick leave, Virginia workers are forced to choose between their job and the health of their family and public. This risks further spreading the coronavirus and prevents Virginia's economic recovery.

A paid sick days policy is extremely popular across Virginia and across party lines: 88% of Virginians support a law requiring five paid sick days per year, according to a Christopher Newport University poll.

A paid sick days policy will keep Virginians healthy, save Virginia money, and keep our businesses open and safe. Virginia businesses will benefit from higher employee productivity and lower employee turnover.

We strongly urge you to support this bill. It is the right thing to do for Virginia's workers and their families, and it will be good for Virginia's businesses.

Sincerely,

Janine Greenwood and Denise Murden
Co-Vice Presidents for Public Policy
AAUW-VA