

HEALTHY WORKING FAMILIES ACT 2017



The Maryland Catholic Conference works in conjunction with the Working Matters Coalition to advocate for the passage of the Healthy Working Families Act so that workers can earn sick leave to care for themselves or a family member.

Everyone gets sick, but not everyone can take time off from work to get better. In fact, approximately 750,000 Marylanders have no ability to earn a single day of paid sick leave – that’s 750,000 people who have to make decisions to either risk losing income and/or their jobs, or going to work sick, sending a child to school or daycare sick, or taking a care of a parent who’s ill. For the average family without earned paid sick days, just 3.5 days without pay jeopardizes an entire month’s grocery budget.

This legislation allows employees to earn one hour of paid sick and safe leave for every 30 hours they work (up to 7 days/56 hours per year for full-time workers) in businesses with 15 or more employees. For businesses with fewer than 15 employees, the employees can earn one hour of unpaid, job-protected leave for every 30 hours they work (up to 7 days/56 hours per year for full-time workers).

“Safe time” allows employees to address medical, counseling, legal, and relocation needs resulting from domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault. Job-protected earned sick and safe leave days can help victims of abuse or assault build and maintain safety and financial stability.

Allowing employees to earn sick leave can save businesses millions of dollars in reduced turnover and keeps workplaces healthier. For example, flu rates have declined considerably in U.S. cities where earned sick leave laws were recently implemented.

TAKE ACTION

1. Pray for all who have no ability to earn sick days, advocates who are working to pass this legislation, and for legislators.
2. Sign up for the Catholic Advocacy Network at mdcatholic.org/CAN to stay up-to-date on the Healthy Working Families Act and other legislation.
3. Visit www.earnedsickdaysmd.org for more information about earned sick leave.
4. Contact your legislators and urge them to support the Healthy Working Families Act.

CHURCH TEACHING

In January 2014, the Maryland Bishops released a statement on the Dignity of Work and specifically noted that, “It is in the best interests of all to enact reasonable policies that keep our workplaces healthy by allowing workers to stay home when they or their dependent family members are sick, without undue penalties.” They recognize the need for and benefits of people having the ability to earn sick leave to promote a healthy work environment, job security, and the ability to take care of family members who become ill.

Pope Francis said, “May insurance for old age, for illness, for accidents in the workplace, never be lacking... May you be conscious of the inalienable dignity of each worker, in whose service you work.” Earned sick leave is, in essence, insurance that people can maintain their jobs when they or their loved ones become ill.

The Healthy Working Families Act is not just about the dignity of work but also about the dignity of the worker and valuing the needs of families.

