ASK THE CANDIDATES

How will you make sure workers are accessing paid sick days and family leave?

- Do you support allowing workers to earn one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked, up to five days total paid time off?
- One option for providing paid family leave is through a state-administered insurance program, in which all workers pay a small premium (roughly $1.50 a week) and receive a weekly payout that replaces some portion of their wages when they take time off for legally protected family and medical reasons, like recovering from childbirth. Would you support such a program? If not, why?

North Carolina’s leaders should focus on policies such as earned paid sick days and family and medical leave insurance that benefit workers, businesses, and the economy as a whole.

FACTS YOU CAN USE

- More than 1 million workers in North Carolina have no opportunity to earn paid sick leave, and even fewer can take longer-term paid leave to address a health condition or welcome a new child.
- Only 12 percent of U.S. workers have access to paid family leave through their employers. Less than 40 percent have personal medical leave through an employer-provided temporary disability program, leaving out millions of workers who cannot afford to take time off for family and medical reasons.
- Forty percent of U.S. workers are protected by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act—the only federal law designed to help working people meet the dual demands of job and family.
- 1.2 million private-sector workers in North Carolina are not entitled to any earned paid sick leave. That means 33 percent of the private-sector workforce must give up needed wages and possibly risk their jobs so they can care for their own health needs or the health needs of family members.
- Workers earning low incomes (disproportionately women and workers of color) are significantly less likely to have earned paid sick days. Sixty percent of those earning less than $20,000 per year lack access to paid leave.
- On average, school-age children miss at least three school days per year due to health reasons, and younger children have even higher rates of illness. When parents are available to care for their sick children, the children recover more quickly, are less likely to develop serious illnesses, and have improved overall health.

DID YOU GET A REAL, MEANINGFUL ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION?

If not, here are some follow-up questions that might help you get a more specific answer:

- Please be more specific about the actions you will take to implement your plan.
- You have mentioned ways individuals might take action to benefit themselves. Please focus your response on how you will ensure North Carolina institutions and public policies can better support those affected.
- Can you tell me about what principles or values will guide your decisions on this issue?
- What are the problems you see in the current approach?

TELL US WHAT YOU HEARD.

VISIT WWW.NCJUSTICE.ORG/ELECTION2020 TO SHARE THE ANSWERS YOU RECEIVED.