



ASK THE CANDIDATES

How will you make sure working North Carolinians have paid sick days and paid leave during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, passed in March by Congress, provided paid sick days and paid leave for working people for limited purposes during the pandemic. However, the law exempted large companies with 500 or more employees, leaving more than half of North Carolina's workforce behind. Do you support expanding access to federal emergency paid sick days and paid leave to include employees at companies with 500 or more workers?
- Do you support allowing workers to earn paid time off to use when sick, for preventative medical care or caring for a sick loved one?
- 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 weekly wage replacement when they need to 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 act urgently to ensure all working North Carolinians can access paid leave and paid sick days throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

FACTS YOU CAN USE

- Before the pandemic, **more than 1 million workers** in North Carolina already had no opportunity to earn paid sick leave, and even fewer could 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 by providing *unpaid leave*.
- Prior to COVID-19, **1.2 million private-sector workers** in North Carolina were already not entitled to any earned paid sick leave. That means 33 percent of the private-sector workforce have been giving up needed wages and possibly risking 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. Many of these same people are working in low-wage jobs now considered "essential".
- Paid sick days and paid leave were already much needed, but during COVID-19, they are **necessary, front-line policies** to protect the public health and protect the spread of illness in any communicable disease outbreak.

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.