

## Sick Leave for Employees (SB20-205)

Testimony to the Senate State, Veterans, Military Affairs

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of [SB20-205](#). My name is Andrea Kuwik, and I am a policy analyst with the Bell Policy Center. The Bell Policy Center provides policymakers, advocates, and the public with reliable resources to create a practical policy agenda that promotes economic mobility for every Coloradan.

As an organization dedicated to advancing policies supportive of economic opportunity for all, we're excited to express our support for SB20-205, which will require all employers to provide paid sick leave for employees. Research shows when in place, paid sick leave has widespread community benefits for:

- **Businesses**, which see [increased productivity, decreased employee turnover](#), and [employment growth](#)
- **Workers**, who become [more likely to seek preventative health care](#) and have greater economic security
- **Children**, who receive [more regular check-ups, dental care, and flu shots](#)
- **Communities**, which have lower rates of communal illness. For example, studies show paid sick leave legislation can decrease flu rates by [5.5 percent to 6.5 percent](#).

Though a [well-researched and proven benefit](#), paid sick leave isn't universally accessible. [Federal data](#) shows upper-income, white, professional employees have disproportionate access, as seen below:

Wage & Industry Characteristics	% of Workers with Access
Finance	91%
Retail	64%
Accommodation & Food	45%
Workers in the Highest Wage Quartile	90%
Workers in the Lowest Wage Quartile	47%

Research from the [Institute for Women's Policy Research](#) show approximately 42 percent of private sector workers in Colorado lack access to paid sick leave.

Without action, we know families in Colorado will continue to suffer. Research from Oxfam shows approximately [20 percent of low-wage working mothers](#) report losing a job because either they, or a child, were sick. Even for those who are able to take unpaid time off while keeping their job, the economic impacts for these families are significant. According to research from the [Economic Policy Institute](#), for the average worker:

- Three days of unpaid work is nearly equivalent to the household budget for a month's worth of groceries or utilities
- Two days of unpaid sick time is approximately equivalent to a month's worth of gas
- Seven and a half days could be equivalent to monthly rent or mortgage payments

With [approximately three-quarters of workers](#) reporting that they're living paycheck to paycheck, these unplanned reductions in household income can have meaningful and long-lasting effects on household security.

By passing paid sick leave legislation in Colorado, we'll be taking strong steps to support the health, well-being, and financial security of thousands of Colorado families. Thank you again for this opportunity to submit written testimony, and we urge support for SB20-2005.