

## Draft Resolution on Paid Sick Leave

**Sponsors:** Hadassah; Jewish Labor Committee; Silicon Valley; Union for Reform Judaism

**Summary:** This resolution addresses the issue of paid sick leave. It calls for coalitions and advocacy to support legislation requiring companies to provide paid sick leave taking into account the risks to public health, number of employees, and the number of hours worked by each employee. The JCPA does not have policy on this issue.

1 The rights of workers have long been a bedrock social justice concern and a priority of American  
2 Jews. With strong Jewish leadership, major achievements such as the minimum wage, the forty-  
3 hour work week, the abolition of child labor, and family and medical leave have enhanced the  
4 quality of life for millions over successive generations.

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6 This commitment is inspired by Jewish tradition that speaks strongly to valuing workers' dignity  
7 as well as maintaining healthy families. We are taught in the Torah, "You shall not abuse a  
8 needy and destitute laborer, whether a fellow Israelite or a stranger in one of the communities of  
9 your land. You must pay out the wages due on the same day, before the sun sets, for the worker  
10 is needy and urgently depends on it; else a cry to the Eternal will be issued against you and you  
11 will incur guilt" (Deut. 24:14-15).

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13 The landmark 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act recognized the familial needs that tug at  
14 every worker. But neither this nor any other federal law requires employers to continue to pay  
15 workers during their family or medical leave. By supporting paid sick leave we hope to ensure  
16 that no one must choose between their health or the health of a family member and their financial  
17 security.

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19 The United States lags far behind the rest of the world when it comes to paid sick leave; 163  
20 nations already guarantee paid sick leave, including Canada, Israel, and nearly every country in  
21 Europe. Of the European countries that guarantee paid sick leave, all guarantee more than 11  
22 days.

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24 The Jewish Council for Public Affairs believes:

- 25 • Lack of paid sick days not only raises issues of job security and worker justice, but issues of  
26 public health as well. Workers who interact with the public every day—among them food  
27 and public accommodation workers, as well as workers in child care centers and nursing  
28 homes—disproportionately lack paid sick days. Workers without access to paid sick days are  
29 50 percent more likely to report to work while sick than their counterparts with paid sick  
30 days. Lack of paid sick leave therefore increases the risk of spreading disease, often to those  
31 most vulnerable: children, the sick, and the elderly.
- 32 • Paid sick days are of particular importance to women who are over-represented in low-wage  
33 jobs (typically lacking such leave) and are most likely to act as the family’s primary  
34 caregiver as well as the one most responsible for handling doctors’ appointments and follow-  
35 up care for their children.
- 36 • Paid sick days standards have been proven to help businesses reduce turnover and improve  
37 worker productivity. The costs of replacing workers, including advertising positions,  
38 interviewing, and training replacements, are often greater than the cost of paid sick time to  
39 retain existing workers. Since 2007, a year after San Francisco implemented a paid sick days  
40 law, job growth has been consistently higher in San Francisco than in neighboring counties  
41 that lack a comparable law.

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43 The community relations field should:

- 44 • Support and advocate for legislation that requires employers to provide reasonable paid sick  
45 leave to employees to attend to their own health and the health of their families, taking into  
46 account the risks to public health, number of employees, and the number of hours worked by  
47 the employee;
- 48 • Build coalitions and engage in campaigns to support paid sick days; and
- 49 • Urge our own local and national agencies to examine their employment and contracting  
50 practices to implement the goals of this resolution and set an example for their communities.