

4 December 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
U.S House of Representatives
H-232 US. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Leader Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, US. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As we enter the final month of this year, we are confronted by many grim realities. More than two thousand Americans are dying every day from COVID-19, and hospital ICUs are full all around the country.

As you may be aware, public health studies continue to show that case clusters are often found when people show up at their workplace with mild symptoms. Some feel pressure to appear on the job from their employer but, unfortunately, many people cannot afford to lose days of work, or fear they will be fired if they don't show up. Simply put, no testing, government, or health-care program can stop the spread if worksites are a COVID petri dish. No one should have to choose between feeding their family and keeping their co-workers safe. **Paid sick leave is a public health issue, and guaranteeing paid sick leave will help to curb the pandemic.**

We applaud Congress for passing the Families First Coronavirus Act (FFCA) in the CARES bill this past spring to address this public health issue for employers who employ less than 500 individuals. This provision, set to expire on **December 31, 2020**, requires employees be paid sick leave benefits if they are quarantined, have COVID-19 symptoms, and have sought medical advice, or are caring for someone who is likewise quarantined or symptomatic. Furthermore, these protections provide sick leave for employees to care for their children if their schools or day care suddenly close for COVID-related reasons.

We can keep our economy moving forward and get our children back to school, but only if we get the pandemic under control. Paid sick leave can reduce the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces and communities by removing the barrier to employees staying home if they might have the virus. Even one infection can set off an outbreak. Yet this important provision to provide sick leave protections **is set to expire without reauthorization on December 31, 2020.**

Therefore, **we urge you to include an extension of the FFCA paid sick leave benefits on any upcoming coronavirus supplemental package or annual appropriations legislation.**

Our nation has experienced a great deal of suffering and loss at the hands of this pandemic. There is a light at the end of this tunnel though, as a return to normal is coming. Until we reach that day, our country needs this important sick leave policy renewed to save lives and keep the economy moving.

Signed,

American Public Health Association
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Big Cities Health Coalition

Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security
National Association of County and City Health Officials
Resolve to Save Lives, an Initiative of Vital Strategies
Trust for America's Health

