

To the Labor Committee

February 25, 2010

Testimony on Paid Sick Days, SB 63

My name is Dawnia and I am a school bus driver from Bridgeport. I have been working at my company for almost nine years, and I still do not have paid sick days. This is a real problem for me because I am diabetic and have high blood pressure. Fortunately I am on medication, but that doesn't keep these conditions from making me sick from time to time. When that happens, the best thing for me to do is take half a day and rest up. Having a day every couple months to be able to manage my illness or deal with whatever flu or virus is going around with the kids would make a world of difference to improving my health.

Last year I took a total of three half-days off of work. I got a bad cold, but because I can't afford to take longer than half a day, I was taking over-the-counter medication. This caused my blood pressure to shoot up, and I got even sicker. As it turns out, my company will penalize you a whole day's worth of pay when you call out, even if you're still working half the day. After I had missed two half-days, I was told by my supervisor not to come back to work without a doctor's note. I went that very same day to see a doctor, who gave me a note and a prescription for more blood pressure medication. After missing the day's pay I couldn't afford to buy the pills I needed, so the next morning, I was still very ill. As a result, I was suspended from doing my work for another 2.5 days, still without pay! It was a good thing I recovered from my illness by the end of my suspension because once you have six half-days off of work, you are terminated. Fired. Out of work.

Since then I haven't missed a single half-day of work. I drive that bus no matter what. I can't afford to lose my job! So during flu-season, I drive the kids around while suffering from a runny nose, fever, congestion, etc. Recently I had to pull the bus over twice and vomit on the side of the road.

This is not good for me or the kids. Between my regular bus route and driving charter buses, I come into contact with an average of sixty different kids a week. I don't want to spread my germs to them and give them the flu, but I have no choice. I earn around \$93 a day. Even if I didn't have to fear for my job when taking a day off, how can I pay my bills without that?

Please, make sure the paid sick days bill becomes law this year, and vote for SB 63.

Thank you,

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