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Isabella fell ill that day as well, and she and her brother were both sick for about a week. Isabella developed a sinus infection and bronchitis as well as the flu.

So in all, I missed about two weeks of work to care for my kids.

I got no sick pay, so my paycheck for that period was almost nothing. That caused tremendous hardship for my family. My husband and I lived paycheck-to-paycheck. We had no choice.

We are trying to pay down debts and make our family financially stable, but it's been difficult. And it's made immeasurably harder because whenever we get sick or our children get sick, we have to decide whether to stay home without pay, or to disregard doctor's orders and risk getting sicker and infecting others by going to work or school.

When I don't get paid, it wreaks havoc on our family budget. My husband handles the finances and is able to juggle things around so we can make ends meet, but sometimes we have to borrow from the rent money we've put aside. We hate to do that, but sometimes we have no choice.

That's one of the reasons I joined MomsRising, a wonderful million-member online organization that represents mothers like me across this country. MomsRising supports the paid sick days bill because families like mine need to be able to earn paid sick days – so we don't have to borrow from our rent money and go deeper into debt every time our kids get sick.

When I was asked if I would come here and share my story, and tell you how my family has been affected by this, I was more than willing because having no paid sick days really hurts our family's finances and economic stability.

I am speaking not only for myself, but for many other moms and families in Connecticut who are dealing with the same thing right now – and who need relief.

I frequently see parents put sick kids on the school bus because those parents don't have access to paid sick days. And I know that sometimes school bus drivers have to go to work sick because they can't afford to take a day off of work. That just isn't good for any of our families.

Being able to earn paid sick days would help so many parents and families I know through my work, church, and community, and many more that I don't know personally but who struggle with these same issues.

I am honored to be here today, to take part in this hearing, and to have a chance to tell my story and represent the other members of MomsRising who can't be here today. I hope it will make a difference and convince you to pass the paid sick days bill, so all workers will be able to earn paid sick days.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF DESIREE ROSADO
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Joint Labor and Employment Committee on
Senate Bill 913: AN ACT MANDATING EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO
EMPLOYEES

March 1, 2011

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for holding this hearing on paid sick days. It is an issue that matters deeply to families like mine, in Connecticut and around the country. Thank you, also, for giving me the opportunity to testify here today.

My name is Desiree Rosado. I have been married for 15 years and have three children, ages 13, 11 and eight. My oldest daughter, Isabella, is in 8th grade. My middle daughter, Alicia, is in 6th grade. My son, David, is in 2nd grade.

Like most, we are a working family. I have lived and worked in Groton, Connecticut for 13 years. I currently work for Student Transportation of America as a bus driver. I drive elementary, middle and high school students – including my children – to school and home again afterwards.

My husband works as a security guard supervisor at the Groton Naval Submarine base. He's been working there for six years.

We are members of a church called International Family Worship Center, where my husband and I head the Praise and Worship Department.

Neither my husband nor I are able to earn paid sick days. Luckily, for the last year our family has been mostly healthy. The few times this year someone in the family has been sick, it's happened on the weekend or over a vacation, so no one missed school or work. And neither my husband nor I has had to lose a day's pay to stay home with sick children.

This wasn't the case during the recent swine flu pandemic though: In the fall of 2009 I was working for the public school system as an aide and I was not allowed to earn paid sick days at that job either. All three of my children caught H1N1. It was rough going for awhile.

First Alicia got a terrible headache followed by fever of about 102 that lasted for almost a week. She had stomach pain, dizziness and body aches. I had to miss work to stay home and take care of her.

The very day Alicia was able to go back to school, I went back to work. But I had been in class for about one hour when the school nurse called to tell me that David had a fever of 101. She said he had to go home.