



**Testimony Presented to the
Senate Committee on Michigan Competitiveness
HB 4052**

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Good morning, Chairman Shirkey and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Peter Ruark, Senior Policy Analyst of the Michigan League for Public Policy, a nonpartisan policy institute dedicated to economic opportunity for all. We oppose House Bill 4052, which would prohibit local governments from passing ordinances related to (among other things) earned sick leave, predictable schedules and minimum wage.

Most or all of us in this room work for employers that provide sick days. It is easy for us to take for granted that if we need to miss work due to illness or a sick child, we can do so without losing part of our wages. We might forget that 70% of the lowest-paid workers do not have this flexibility. Missing two days of work can mean being unable to pay a bill or take care of other family needs. Workers who get sick may feel pressure to go to work anyway, endangering their own health, their co-workers' health, and in some cases public health. None of us wants to eat a meal prepared by a sick line cook or receive change from a sick cashier, nor do we want sick direct care workers tending to our loved ones.

We often talk about the dignity and the opportunity for economic improvement that comes with work, but when a job does not offer flexibility for family illness, it fails on that promise. Low-wage workers contribute to our economy, are raising our state's future workers, and deserve to have the same flexibility to respond to illness that you and I have. No one chooses to get sick!

As for concerns that a "patchwork" of local paid sick leave ordinances will confuse businesses, this Legislature can solve that problem in a different way, one that helps our state's workers rather than tying the hands of local communities. This Legislature can pass a statewide law that enables employees to receive earned sick leave at a rate of one hour for each 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year for employees of a small business and up to 70 hours for all other workers. It is doubtful that this small amount of required sick leave (equivalent to five full days

(over)

of work per year) will create significant hardship for small businesses, but it will make a big difference for the individuals who work for those businesses and their families.

A growing number of Michigianians are recognizing that such laws help workers succeed at and keep their jobs and protect public health. According to a recent poll, 86% of Michigan voters agree that every worker should be able to earn sick days in order to take time off work without losing pay, and 83% would be supportive of this Legislature passing a bill that would allow workers to earn one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked.

In the meantime, while this Legislature debates whether to pass a statewide sick leave law, we hope you will do the right thing by not prohibiting local governments from enacting sick leave protections for workers in their communities.

Thank you. I will be happy to answer any questions.