



Date: February 5, 2025

To: Chair Moss and Members of the Senate Committee on Regulatory Affairs

From: Monique Stanton, President and CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy

Subject: Opposition to Senate Bill 15 — Changes to Michigan’s Earned Paid Sick Time

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The Michigan League for Public Policy strongly opposes Senate Bill 15, sponsored by Sen. Sam Singh, and we urge you to uphold the earned paid sick time policies in effect after the Michigan Supreme Court ruling last July.

For those of you who are not yet familiar, the League is a nonpartisan research and advocacy organization that promotes economic opportunity for all and analyzes the impact of public policy and budget decisions on the lives of Michiganders who have been historically and systemically left out of opportunities to advance prosperity. The League is also the state’s Kids Count organization, working as a part of a national effort to measure the well-being of children at the state and local levels and to shape efforts that improve the lives of Michigan children.

In recent years, Michigan has taken significant steps toward creating a fairer and more equitable economy for its workers. Two key policies set to take effect this month — the new minimum wage increase and expanded access to paid sick time — are crucial measures that will benefit not just workers, but also businesses and communities across the state.

Senate Bill 15 would significantly water down worker protections and undermine access to earned paid sick time for hundreds of thousands of employees across our state. SB 15 alters the definition of a “small business” by increasing the threshold from 10 employees to 25, significantly weakening paid sick time protections for thousands of workers. While the bill allows employees to accrue sick time at a rate of one hour per 30 hours worked, it enforces a strict cap of 40 hours per year for small business employees — far below the 72-hour requirement for larger businesses. If enacted, SB 15 would reclassify up to 478,500 employees as working for a small business, arbitrarily capping their paid sick time at 40 hours per year. This reclassification will remove important protections that workers have been promised and means workers who experience serious illness or medical emergencies may find themselves without sufficient paid sick time, forcing them to choose between their health and their job.

SB 15 is particularly concerning for healthcare and child care workers, as it prevents up to 102,240 registered nurses — and tens of thousands of additional nursing care personnel and child care staff — from taking paid sick time on short notice due to illness. The ability for these

Using data to educate, advocate and fight for policy solutions that undo historic and systemic racial and economic inequities to lift up Michiganders who have been left out of prosperity.

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frontline caregivers to take leave when they are sick is not just a worker's rights issue — it is a public health necessity. Limiting access to paid sick time would create dangerous conditions for patients, nursing home residents and children by increasing the risk of illnesses spreading in vulnerable care settings. It is unacceptable that this legislation would prioritize employer convenience over the safety of both workers and the people they care for.

Additionally, SB 15 makes it easier for employers to commit sick leave-related violations by stripping employees of their right to bring civil litigation against noncompliant employers. By shortening the reporting window for violations from three years to just one and removing an employee's ability to file a lawsuit, SB 15 removes a vital piece of accountability and shields employers from meaningful consequences. This creates an unfair and unbalanced system where businesses can deny workers their legally earned sick time with little fear of repercussions.

Finally, the bill makes a change that may leave employees without sufficient sick time when they need it at the start of a calendar year and disrupt their ability to care for themselves and their families. The bill seems to allow a deeply problematic buyout provision, which permits employers to cash out accrued sick time without employee consent instead of allowing it to rollover to the next year. A buyout such as this could create a hardship early in the year when contagious illnesses like the flu and other respiratory viruses and norovirus are often at their worst.

At its core, this bill weakens essential worker protections, limits access to earned paid sick time, and makes it more difficult for employees — especially those in healthcare and child care — to take time off when they need it most. By prioritizing employer convenience over worker well-being, SB 15 puts both employees and the communities they serve at risk. Michigan's workforce deserves policies that strengthen, not diminish, their rights and protections. I respectfully ask you to stand with workers and oppose this harmful legislation.