

ISSUES & POLICIES

About Mandatory Paid Sick Leave



Paid-time-off proposals have become a perennial issue for CBIA at the Capitol. Year after year, the Labor Committee attempts to make Connecticut the first state in the country to legislate how much time off employers can offer. A 2010 bill, for example, would have required Connecticut employers of 50 or more hourly and nonexempt workers to provide a minimum of one hour of paid time off for every 40 hours an employee works, up to a maximum of 40 hours per calendar year.

Ignores Business Needs

Such proposals are raised with little consideration for the cost of replacing workers who call in sick as well as the widely varying business demands, financial resources, and workforce needs among Connecticut companies. Mandatory paid time off deprives companies of the flexibility to design and negotiate their own benefit and time-off policies that best meet the needs of their employees and their businesses. In addition, such mandates force companies to pay wages in cases where they would not otherwise have to. For some firms, that would amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional payroll expenses.

Disregards Economic Realities

In addition, mandating paid time off would put Connecticut businesses at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis other states. Proponents seem to disregard the fact that when our businesses can't compete, it affects our economy, state revenues, and the employees who rely on those businesses for their livelihoods.

Misdirected Efforts

The Labor Committee's persistence in proposing a paid-time-off mandate year after year is perplexing given that Connecticut businesses are recognized as being among the best in the country when it comes to taking care of their employees. They provide safe working conditions, high wages, and good benefits.

In addition, the vast majority of Connecticut's employers already offer paid time off to their employees. According to a recent CBIA's benefits survey, 84% of the 159 Connecticut businesses polled offered paid sick leave or had paid-time-off policies that included sick days. The companies surveyed also gave their employees an average of nine paid holidays per year.

Instead of addressing areas in which Connecticut already excels, policymakers should focus on real, pressing problems, such as the high cost of doing business in the state and getting back the more than 100,000 jobs we've lost in the recession.