



voices for children

IN NEBRASKA

Telling the whole story.

February 24, 2014

To: Members of the Business and Labor Committee

From: Aubrey Mancuso, Policy Coordinator

Re: Support for LB 1090

Voices for Children supports LB 1090 because paid sick leave is critical for working parents. The majority of parents in Nebraska are working and almost three quarters of all children under 6 have all available parents in the workforce.¹

The reality is that these children get sick. On average, school-age children miss at least 3 school days per year due to health reasons and younger children have even higher rates of illness.² In the first two years of life alone, most children have eight to 10 colds.³ For parents without paid sick leave, any of these typically minor illnesses can result in an unplanned loss of needed income or even job loss.

There are also public health cost and consequences associated with a lack of paid sick leave. When parents cannot care for their own sick child and they must attend child care, it takes a toll on the health of the child and puts other children and child care providers at risk for illness.⁴ Paid sick leave for parents is also important to ensuring that children can access preventive care. Without access to paid leave, parents may postpone or skip well-child visits or interrupt vaccinations or other necessary treatments. Not receiving preventive care can make children more vulnerable to serious illness.⁵

In general, children are positively impacted by stable parental employment. Job stability for parents of young children depends on being able to take time off to care for their children when needed. Working parents shouldn't have to choose between caring for a sick child and either losing their job or being unable to meet basic expenses and we respectfully urge the committee to advance this bill. Thank you.

¹ Kids Count in Nebraska Report (2013)

² Vicky Lovell, No Time to be Sick: Why Everyone Suffers when Workers Don't Have Paid Sick Leave, Institute for Women's Policy Research, May 2004, using data from Bloom, Cohen, Vickerie and Wondimu, 2003

³ Shelov, S. MD, and Altmann, T. MD, eds. (2009, October 13). Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5. American Academy of Pediatrics. New York, NY: Aspen Publishers, Inc.

⁴ Heymann, Earle, and Egleston, 1996, as cited in Lovell, No Time to be Sick, 2004

⁵ Testimony of Dr. Heidi Hartmann, Institute for Women's Policy Research, before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, 2006.

7521 Main Street, Suite 103
Ralston, Nebraska 68127

(402) 597-3100 P
(402) 597-2705 F

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