

THE FAMILY CARE ACT

Strengthens Families

Without access to family care days, hard-working Georgians are forced to choose between their job and caring for a loved one when they get sick. For many families living paycheck to paycheck, missing one day's wages can be devastating, and missing a day of work can get them fired.

The Family Care Act allows families to use their own sick time to care for a sick child at home, take an elderly parent to the doctor, or manage critical care for loved ones with disabilities.

An estimated 878,000 workers in Georgia don't have access to Family Care Days, with low wage workers least likely to have them. For example, one in three workers in the hospitality industry do not have Family Care Days, forcing those who can least afford it to choose between taking care of a sick loved one and losing a paycheck—or worse—their job.

SPOTLIGHT: Helps families

"Three years ago I had brain surgery. When I woke up from surgery, I needed my children to care for me and be my medical advocates. Both my daughters were told that they must take unpaid time off, which they could not afford to do. Even though they both had saved their sick time, my girls were not allowed to use it to care for me."

—Carolyn Pinkston, Retired Public Transit Trainer



Strengthens the Economy

In this economy, businesses are looking for ways to save money, and Family Care Days are one way to do that. Studies have shown that businesses benefit from flexible workplace policies like Family Care Days, because they increase productivity, loyalty and morale, and decrease turnover and absences for illness.

Many Georgia businesses, including Delta airlines, SunTrust Bank, the Georgia Farm Bureau, and Georgia Power Company allow employees to use their own sick time to care for loved ones. Workers with access to paid sick days take an average of 3.9 days a year for their own illness and 1.3 days a year to care for family members. Among workers with paid sick day policies, half do not use any of their sick time, showing that sick days are viewed as an insurance policy—only to be used when needed.

SPOTLIGHT: Employer testimony

"Providing our employees with flexible use of their sick days allows us to maintain our staff with minimum turnover. It is crucial in our industry to have experienced employees who stay with a project from beginning to end. It makes good business sense to make sure our staff is taking care of their own needs and their families' needs. When basic needs are taken care of, they can concentrate on work and we can grow our business."

—William Polk, Principal, Richard Wittschiebe Hand



Promotes Healthy Classrooms and Saves Money

Working parents without family care days are forced to send sick children to school, spreading illness to other children and teachers.

Parents without family care days are five times more likely to take a child to the emergency room because they are unable to take time off work for routine doctor visits. These preventable emergency room visits burden the healthcare system and cost taxpayers money.

Sick kids recover faster when cared for by a parent. Studies have shown that the presence of a parent can shorten a child's hospital stay by 31 percent.

SPOTLIGHT: Healthy classrooms

"In my 14 years working in childcare, I have had too many parents who were forced to drop their sick, contagious child off at school because they could not afford to miss a day of work. It's lose-lose, and it spreads illness throughout the classroom. Allowing parents to use their own sick time to care for a sick child at home helps kids recover faster and keeps classrooms safe."

—Stacey Calvin, Atlanta preschool teacher



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A Common Sense Solution

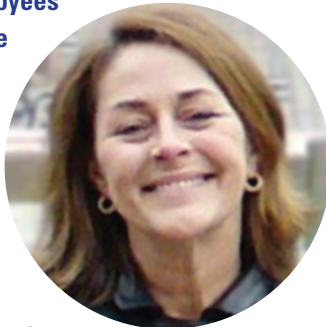
Family Care Days keep workers in their jobs, provide needed relief for working families living paycheck to paycheck, boost business productivity, and prevent the spread of illness at schools and in our communities.

This modest, cost-effective policy allows workers to use sick time they have earned to care for their families. It does not require employers to offer any new benefit or sick day.

SPOTLIGHT: Employer testimony

“Before 2005 Delta employees could only use sick time for their own illness. Employees who had sick children at home needed to work or they’d risk their jobs. It was distracting, created a tense workplace, lowered morale and productivity, and led to increased errors. When Delta allowed workers to use their own sick time for family members, we saw an immediate productivity gain by reducing the time managers had to spend on sick-day oversight, and by lowering tension between managers and workers. The policy has been good for employees, our customers and for Delta.”

– Mari McCoy, former Delta airlines manager



Family Care Act: The Facts

Sponsored by Rep. Katie Dempsey (R-Rome), the Family Care Act allows:

- Workers to use sick days they have already earned through existing company policies to care for an ill child, spouse or parent.
- Businesses to continue their existing sick time policies.

Eight states currently have similar laws in effect.

Among many organizations supporting this bill are AARP GA, the GA Coalition Against Domestic Violence, GA Council on Developmental Disabilities, Easter Seals, the League of Women Voters GA, the GA Federation of Women’s Clubs and the Georgia PTA.

SPOTLIGHT

“As a parent-mentor in a public school system, I work with families every day who do not have the option of using their sick time to care for their kids, and I have witnessed the devastating impact that can have on a family.”

– Kim Chester, pictured with daughter Haley, is an advocate with the GA Council in Developmental Disabilities, in Cartersville



The Family Care Act

Strengthening Families and Georgia’s Economy



In these tough economic times the Family Care Act will improve business productivity, keep families & classrooms healthy, and help families stay financially secure.

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