



STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

EXTEND EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE PROPOSED EARLY BUDGET ACTION ITEM

February 8, 2021

All forms of employer-provided COVID-19-specific emergency paid sick leave expired on December 31, 2020, and workers have since been left with either inadequate or no rights to sick leave while recovering from COVID-19, quarantining following exposure, or caring for a family member sick with COVID-19.

The end of these programs—the Federal Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and AB 1867, which filled in gaps created by FFCRA—has forced countless Californians to work while sick and/or infectious, abandoning them to suffer through a horrible, painful illness at work while endangering co-workers and the public through far greater odds of COVID-19 exposure.

Studies have found that the emergency paid sick leave provisions in FFCRA benefited workers' health, saved employers money, and reduced viral spread. In addition, the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 will reimburse covered employers for the cost of providing this leave through March 30, 2021.

Further, new proposed vaccine distribution tiers could force millions of essential workers to the back of the line, meaning that they will likely wait several months longer (or more) before meeting vaccine eligibility requirements. And even the workers still included in the next tier could also find themselves unvaccinated for months, given ongoing scarcity of doses and relentless distribution struggles. We simply cannot ask workers to wait so long for a vaccine without any form of reliable and quickly available emergency paid sick leave.

Given the extremely time-sensitive need for this leave, we urge legislators to approve this proposal immediately as part of the early action budget. We cannot wait for later budget discussions or even legislation with an urgency clause; workers—and the public depending on them—need these programs extended now. It is the least we can do to care for those caring for us during this terrible pandemic.

PLEASE SUPPORT THIS EARLY BUDGET ACTION ITEM!