



February 16, 2015

Chair Holvey, Chair Dembrow, for the record my name is Melissa Garcia I am an SEIU 49 member. I am a medical assistant at Kaiser Permanente. At Kaiser I have a great job and we have a labor management partnership that really improves patient care, but using our sick days is an area that has been a challenge in my job.

I and my co-workers have earned sick days and as a health care provider I encourage you to expand earned sick days to other people, but I support legislation goes beyond just expanding sick days it protects workers like myself and my co-workers when we use our sick days.

We have an attendance policy that is meant to hold people accountable who are misusing sick days unfortunately it has such a broad net that it catches everyone it. Including people who are trying to use their sick days appropriately. I recently defended a woman who has worked at Kaiser for thirty years who recently was disciplined for missing work for being sick.

If you use more than three sick days without a family medical leave note in six months you can have a flag put in your employment file. This puts both workers and health care providers in an a bad situation. Providers don't want to provide FMLA notes for things that are just colds or sick kids and as a dedicated worker you don't want to have a note in your file because you got ill. I have a strong work ethic.

I have been working sick for the last two weeks and getting antibiotic refills because I am afraid to use my sick time. Most of the senior employees have a lot of sick time, but no one wants to be disciplined.

The legislature has an incredible opportunity to pass legislation that both expands sick days to workers who don't have it, and protect workers who do have it but can't use it. I encourage you to support the legislation.

Thank you.

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