

February 16, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees  
From: Katie Statman-Weil, Executive Director, Wild Lilac Child Development  
Community  
Re: Support of SB454 and HB2005

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding HB 2005 and SB 454. As the director of an early childhood education and family support program, I want to express my full support for these bills.

Our school serves over 90 families and employs 20 people. We offer all of our employees paid time off that they can use if they are sick. It is clear to us that this policy improves health, promotes financial stability, and strengthens our effectiveness as a staff.

Child care workers are particularly affected by this issue. Most child care workers do not have access to paid sick days, although they are working with a vulnerable population. We believe it is important for our staff to stay home when they are sick, in order to prevent illness from spreading throughout our entire school community. Paid sick days help us keep our staff healthy, which in turn helps us serve the children in our school well.

Child care workers in general are like so many workers in our state – they are committed to their jobs even when they are not making a lot of money. For these workers, paid sick days provide a crucial degree of financial stability. They help them maintain their own wellness. Our employees need and deserve this basic labor standard.

As a preschool and child care provider, we have rules stating that sick children must stay home. This is also key to maintaining a healthy environment at our school. However, we know that many parents do not have access to paid sick time and that they struggle when their kids are sick because they themselves need to go to work. This is an unfair and unhealthy situation, with no good outcomes for anyone – the child whose health is at risk, the parent whose job is at risk, or the schoolmates whose exposure to illness is also at risk.

Finally, I want to stress that we have always offered paid sick time at our preschool/child care and this has clearly not put us out of business. In fact, we have expanded each year and continue to grow. The costs of offering paid sick time are small relative to the benefits to our community, our employees, and our bottom line. HB 2005 and SB 454 will improve financial stability for workers in our state and improve overall health in our communities. I urge you to pass these bills.