

THE FAMILY CARE ACT

Losing a day's wages, or worse, a job, for keeping a sick child home from school or bringing an aging parent to the doctor undermines families' ability to cover the basics like groceries and rent—spending that keep local businesses and the economy moving. **In Georgia, an estimated 878,000 people do not have access to family care days to care for a loved one in need,** forcing them to make the impossible choice between taking care of a sick loved one and keeping food on the table.

The Family Care Act - SB 201 sponsored by Sen Butch Miller (R-Gainesville) - will enable people to use their earned sick time to care for loved ones.



“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. I have witnessed the devastating impact that can have on a family.”

-Kim Chester, Advocate with the GA Council on Developmental Disabilities, Cartersville, GA

FAMILY CARE DAYS WILL STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AND BOOST THE ECONOMY:

- More often than we realize, people's jobs are at risk when they need to care for a family member. Nationwide, **23 percent of workers have lost a job or been threatened with job loss for taking time to care for a personal or family illness.**
- For many families, the loss of a few days' wages can equal a month's worth of groceries.
- The Family Care Act will help keep working people in their jobs, helping to reduce unemployment.
- Family Care Days strengthens economic security for working people and their families without requiring employers to provide any additional sick days.

FAMILY CARE DAYS WILL SAVE GEORGIA MONEY AND STRENGTHEN PUBLIC HEALTH:

- Parents with Family Care Days are less likely to send a sick child to school, reducing the spread of illness in the classroom.

Georgia Job/Family Collaborative

- Parents without Family Care Days are five times more likely to take their child to the emergency room because they were unable to schedule a doctor's visit during normal work hours.
- Children and seniors recover from illness faster when cared for by family members, reducing the length of [hospital stays by nearly a third](#), and improving long-term health.
- The Family Care Act will reduce health risks and control taxpayer-funded health costs.

GEORGIANS STRONGLY SUPPORT THE FAMILY CARE ACT:

- Georgians across the political spectrum support the Family Care Act, and the bill has bipartisan support in the state legislature.
- A July 2016 poll of 650 likely Georgia voters found that, **75% supported the Family Care Act**, including **90%** of Democrats, **66%** of Republicans, and **65%** of Independents”
- The Family Care Act is supported by a broad and diverse coalition of economists, faith communities, small businesses, workers, parents, health professionals, and groups that advocate for women, children, seniors and the disabled.
- Similar measures have been passed in eight states as lawmakers and business owners nationwide recognize that these modest policies strengthen the economy.



“Providing our employees with flexible use of their sick time 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 families' needs. When basic needs are taken care of, they can concentrate on work and we can grow our business.”

William Polk, Principal, Richard Wittschiede Hand Architects

Georgia JobFamily Collaborative

9to5 Georgia; AARP of Georgia; AAUW of Georgia; Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta; Atlanta Alliance on Developmental Disabilities; Coalition of Advocates for Georgia's Elderly; Disability Link; Families First, GA Coalition Against Domestic Violence; GA Commission on Family Violence; GA Council on Developmental Disabilities; GA Federation of Women's Clubs; Georgians for a Healthy Future, Interfaith Children's Movement; Kidney Foundation of GA; League of Women Voters of GA; Lupus Foundation of GA; Men Stopping Violence; National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners- GA Chapter; ProGeorgia; Presbytery of Greater Atlanta; Quality Care for Children; Voices for Georgia's Children; YWCA of Greater Atlanta

Georgia Job/Family Collaborative

www.gajobfamily.org

404/222-0037

gajobfamily@yahoo.com



Basic Message on the Family Care Act

VALUE

Always start a speech, conversation, meeting or lobby visit by connecting with your legislature. Establish a common ground. Your goal is to get the person nodding their head. This is what we agree on.

“We all agree that families are important – for *personalize* (myself/wife/husband/daughter/son/mom), children, our community, our elderly. We all want to help families take care of their own – care for each other.”

PROBLEM

Be clear about your goal. **What problem are you trying to fix?** Sometimes this is also called ‘clearing up misconceptions.’ People think a problem as ben fixed because it doesn’t affect them. Here is some wording to use:

“While many employers allow workers to use sick time they earn to take a parent to the doctor, or keep a sick child home from school – many employers in Georgia do not. They restrict the use of sick days to the employee themselves. Sometimes parents have to lie and say that they are sick in order to care for a family member. This is not good for anyone.

SOLUTION

We can fix this! Our solution will help us get to the value that we all agree on (healthy, supportive families).

“The Family Care Act (SB 201) is a simple, common sense solution, with bi-partisan support. It does not require employers to have any specific sick time policy – only to allow the employee to use 5 days per year of the sick time they earn, for illness or injury of a child, spouse, parent or grandchild.”

The ASK

Move people to action! Ask any audience or legislator to do a specific thing to help achieve the value we agree on – support families.

“Will you vote for the Family Care Act when it comes to a vote in the House/Senate? Will you encourage your fellow legislators to support it also?”

And of course – end by Thanking people for their time!

The logo consists of two overlapping circles, one red and one light red. The text "Georgia Job/Family Collaborative" is written in a black, sans-serif font across the circles.

Georgia Job/Family Collaborative

Three Minute Lobby Meeting for the Family Care Act

- Thanks, introduction and purpose. Person in the group: _____
The first speaker should live in the district of the legislator you are meeting with or speaking with.
Example: *Good morning, thank you taking a few minutes to meet/speak with me. My name is Kim Schofield and I live at 282 Simon Street in SE Atlanta.*

 - I am here with sever other members of the Georgia Chapter of the Lupus Foundation of America – a health organization that is a voice for people impacted by lupus.
 - We are here today to ask for your support for the Family Care Act
- Explain the problem Person in the group: _____
One person in the group says in 1 sentence, *how the Family Care Act applies to them*: “I am a person living with lupus or I am a caregiver of a son/daughter living with lupus. Lupus is a chronic disease that can attack many bodily systems and organs. There are many different types of specialist that treat and manage lupus. Sometimes because of flares, extreme fatigue or unexpected issues with lupus, I may need help to get to my doctor’s visits. When this happens, I have to rely on family members to help me and it jeopardizes my health if they have to choose between missing a day’s pay and the job they need.
- Explain the solution Person in the group: _____
The Family Care Act (SB 201) simply allows a worker who has earned sick time on their job to sue up to 5 days of that time for the illness of an immediate family member. The bill does not require employers to change their policy – simply to allow the worker to use the time they earned for family care.
- The Ask Person in the group: _____
Will you vote in support of the Family Care Act when it comes to the House (or Senate) floor?
Then STOP and LISTEN. (Don’t keep talking).
If yes, say, “THANK YOU!”
If not sure, ask, “Is there any further information I/We can provide? I/We will get that answer to you by email within the next day or two.
If no, ask, “What are your concerns?”

Additional info

If you’re asked: *Who is the sponsor of this bill?* Answer: Senate – Sen. Butch Miller of Gainesville. House – Rep. Katie Dempsey of Rome.

If you’re asked: *Don’t most employers already offer sick days?* Answer: Yes, this bill does not mandate employers offer sick days. This bill is about the use of the flexibility of using these sick days for family members. There are still many employers in Georgia who restrict the use of sick time to employee only. No person with a chronic illness (like me, my daughter, my son, my mom. . .) should be put in the position of having to choose between the job they need and the family they love.