



TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Lisa Grove

RE: Voter Support for Sick Leave Proposal Strong

DATE: September 6, 2011

This analysis is based on a telephone survey of 400 likely 2011 November election voters in the City of Seattle. Interviews were conducted August 23-25, 2011 and the margin of error is +/- 4.9% at the 95% percent level of confidence.

Seattle Voters Support Paid Sick Leave

When given a detailed description of the proposed law providing all employees in the City of Seattle a minimum number of paid sick days, nearly seven in 10 (69%) support the proposal. Less than one-quarter (22%) object to the Sick Leave law.

Support for the proposed ordinance is both broad and deep. Nearly half of the electorate (48%) say they favor the concept “strongly.” In addition, there is only one lone demographic or geographic subgroup that does not offer big double-digit support: Republicans, who are divided (43% favor; 47% oppose).

The Seattle City Council is considering a proposal that requires all employers within the City of Seattle with five or more employees to provide a minimum number of paid sick days to allow workers to care for themselves or to care for immediate family members. Unless the employer chooses to offer more, all employees in companies with five to 49 employees would be eligible to accrue a total of five paid sick days. Those in companies with between 50 and 249 employees would be eligible to accrue a total of seven paid sick days. Those in companies with 250 or more employees would be eligible to accrue a total of nine paid sick days. A waiting period of up to 180 days would be required before new employees are entitled to use paid sick leave. Employers can choose to provide sick leave as general paid time off or as personal time—just as long as the employee can use it when they or a family member get sick. Having heard this, do you favor or oppose this proposal?

Favor, strongly	48%	69%
Favor, not strongly	21%	
Oppose, not strongly	8%	22%
Oppose, strongly	14%	
Undecided	10%	

	Favor	Oppose	Undecided	Favor Margin (net favor minus net oppose)
Men	68	27	6	+41
Women	70	16	14	+54
Democrats	84	5	10	+79
Independents	63	28	10	+35
Republicans	43	47	10	-4
Partisan scores				
100-90	78	12	10	+66
89-70	67	21	13	+46
69-0	64	28	8	+36
High propensity	66	21	13	+45
Medium propensity	69	22	9	+47
Low propensity	71	19	10	+52
Turnout scores				
100-90	64	24	13	+40
89-60	73	18	9	+55
59-0	69	22	9	+47
Under 50	71	19	10	+52
Over 50	67	23	10	+44
Age 70+	61	18	20	+43
Non-college	71	17	11	+54
College +	67	24	9	+43
Union HH	80	16	4	+64
Non-union HH	66	22	12	+44
Parents	73	19	8	+54
Non-parents	67	22	11	+45
Leg. Districts				
34	62	25	13	+37
36	63	27	10	+36
37	76	12	12	+64
43	69	21	10	+48
46	75	18	7	+57
Regions				
Northeast	77	17	7	+60
Northwest	74	19	7	+55
Southeast	70	17	13	+53
Southwest	58	29	13	+29
TOTAL	69	22	10	+47

Seattle Voters Say They Will Pass This Measure If the City Council Doesn't

It appears that voters are prepared to step in and pass Sick Leave if City leaders do not.

Over two-thirds (68%) say they intend to vote yes, with 47% coming in "strong support." We do caution that we did not test actual ballot language.

Voters Also Appear Ready to Reward (Rather than Punish) Candidates Who Support Sick Leave

More than four in 10 say they would be more inclined to support a mayoral (48% more likely) or city council (44% more likely) candidate who was in favor of the sick leave proposal. Less than one-quarter report being turned off by the stance.

If the Seattle City Council does not pass the proposal to require all employers within the city with five or more employees to provide a minimum number of paid sick days, supporters of the law may place it on the ballot as an initiative. Having heard this, would you vote "yes" or "no" on an initiative that requires all employers within the City of Seattle with five or more employees to provide a minimum number of paid sick days?

Yes, strongly	47%	68%
Yes, not strongly	21%	
No, not strongly	9%	
No, strongly	15%	24%
Undecided	10%	

Support Holds After Hearing Arguments on Both Sides

After voters heard two differing views on the issue, they continue to agree strongly with arguments in support of the Paid Sick Leave law. Both of our messages in response are equally effective. The big news is that Sick Leave opponents get no traction on their "now is not the time due to economic woes" positioning when we have the chance to counter.

Everybody Heard:

The paid sick days law would impose an unnecessary mandate on businesses at a time when the economy continues to perform poorly and jobs are scarce. When government imposes requirements on business, costs rise and businesses struggle. Even those who support the principle of providing paid sick days worry that now is not the right time to impose these new requirements.

Half the Sample Heard:

Making sure workers don't have to work while sick is the responsible thing to do. Right now nearly 190,000 Seattle workers—38%—have no paid sick leave. That means well over a third of the work force in Seattle is likely to show up at work sick, putting their co-workers and vulnerable children and seniors at risk. This law prevents the spread of disease and keeps us all healthy.

Agree with sick leave supporters: 65% *Agree with sick leave opponents: 30%*

The Other Half Sample Heard:

At a time when working people need to be able to keep their jobs and support their families, the proposed paid sick days law is more important than ever. Workers are vulnerable now and cannot afford to lose income or risk being fired simply because they have the flu or a child needs medical care. Rebuilding the middle class and strengthening families' economic security requires common-sense protections like paid sick days.

Agree with sick leave supporters: 65% *Agree with sick leave opponents: 27%*