

Issue: AZ - Healthcare and Economy

Talking Points: Protecting Paid Sick Leave in Arizona

COVID-19 is killing thousands of people across Arizona. Stopping the spread of the virus is currently the only way to end the carnage. Doctors know it. Businesses know it. Bereaved families know it. If an infected person knowingly goes to work because their job is the only way to feed their family or keep from being fired, who can blame them?

Fortunately for Arizonans, Proposition 206 has ensured paid sick leave since it went into effect in 2017. Nonetheless, Arizona Republicans have shown that they are willing to do whatever it takes to try and overturn paid leave, minimum wage, and other workers' rights, including subverting the will of the people. They are now hard at work undermining the citizen initiative process itself.

Arizona Citizens Support Paid Leave, Republicans Don't

Arizona Republicans, along with business interests and conservative groups, have been working for years to stop paid sick leave, but their multiple assaults have been defeated thus far. Thanks to Prop 206 (which won with 58% of the vote), paid sick leave is the law in Arizona. Republicans, however, are not taking their defeat lying down.

- In November 2016, voters approved Proposition 206, the "*Fair Wages and Healthy Families Act*," raising the minimum wage statewide and mandating paid sick leave.
- Immediately following the Act's passage, the Arizona Chamber of Commerce, with support from the Goldwater Institute, sued to stop its implementation despite its popularity with citizens.
- In March 2017, the Arizona Supreme Court unanimously rejected the argument that Proposition 206 was unconstitutional, and mandatory paid sick leave went into effect on July 1, 2017.
- Having failed to achieve their goal through the courts and other attempts to preempt its implementation, Republicans are now waging war on the citizen initiative process itself. By legislating new restrictive requirements on citizen initiatives, they have been making it increasingly difficult for Arizonans to get measures on the ballot—a patently anti-democratic attack on citizens' rights.

Paid Sick Leave Benefits Workers *and* Businesses

Paid sick leave not only prevents the spread of disease, lowers healthcare burdens and costs, and promotes overall well-being, it also results in:

- Fewer emergency room visits which drive up insurance costs.
- More visits for preventive care for employees and their families, leading to fewer prolonged illnesses and fewer days off.
- Improved morale, increased productivity, and less job turnover.

While small- or large-business owners may argue that such laws will force them into bankruptcy, studies have shown the opposite: that even low-margin businesses can thrive and expand while offering paid sick leave. Arizonans have repeatedly shown they support paid sick leave. It remains the responsibility of Democratic state legislators to ensure paid sick leave remains a right in Arizona, as the people intended.

For full paper see: [Protecting Paid Leave in Arizona](https://www.localmajority.org/research-reports/#AZ-paidleave)
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