

January 16, 2023

Dear Chair McEwen and Members of the Senate Labor Committee:

My name is Dr. Eric Bohjanen and I am the founder and owner of Zen Eye Care, an optometry and eye care practice located in Duluth, Minnesota. I am writing today to ask for your support for SF 34 (Pappas), the statewide earned sick and safe time legislation.

Lack of earned sick and safe time undermines the health of employees, workplaces, and communities. Too often, people without paid sick time are hesitant or unable to take time off to care for themselves or their family members, or feel too guilty to do so. As a result, kids end up staying home sick by themselves, mental health concerns go untreated, and employees risk exposing their coworkers and customers to illness.

I started my practice six years ago in 2017 and providing earned sick and safe time has only benefited my business. Employees who know they are able to care for themselves and their family members - both their mental and physical health - become more faithful employees. They know that if they don't feel well, they can simply stay home. And, I encourage them to do so, because it protects not only their health but the health of other staff as well as our patrons.

While there are costs associated with paid sick time, failure to provide this time can be even more costly. Sick employees coming to work can result in illness spreading and more staff absences. Losing employees who do not receive the physical and mental health care they need means taking on the expense of recruiting and training new employees.

I strongly believe that if you take care of your employees, they will take care of you. Please support SF 34 (Pappas) to provide access to earned sick and safe time benefits across Minnesota.

Thank you.

Dr. Eric Bohjanen
Owner
Zen Eye Care