

Johnson's Opposition to Paid Sick Days Threatens Coronavirus Response

Written by Citizen Action of Wisconsin Press
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Healthcare advocacy group critical of Senator Ron Johnson for his opposition to paid family leave bill as the country struggles with Coronavirus crisis.

STATEWIDE - Over the weekend Senator Ron Johnson made national headlines for his vocal opposition to sick leave provisions in the Coronavirus Relief Bill which passed the U.S. House of Representatives Friday with the full support of the Trump Administration. The bill is so essential to public health during this unprecedented global emergency, it passed on Friday on a bipartisan basis by an overwhelming vote of 363-40. The bill is now pending in the U.S. Senate.

Senator Johnson may be carrying water for major right-wing business interests such as Club for Growth and National Federation of Independent Businesses, who are putting their ideological opposition to paid family leave over the safety of the American people. According to news reports, Johnson may have influenced 4 GOP Congressmen from Wisconsin who voted against the coronavirus bill on Friday.



The paid sick days provision is designed to make sure that workers do not risk their jobs when they do the right thing by staying home when they are sick, to take care of loved ones, or to look after their children who are without school or child care. Johnson's preferred solution is unemployment insurance, which means workers would be forced to choose between job loss and helping contain the coronavirus.

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"Time is of the essence in containing a pandemic. Despite the loopholes in this bill that exempt too many big corporate employers, passing the Coronavirus Relief Bill immediately and as written is a public health necessity," said Robert Kraig, Executive Director of Citizen Action of Wisconsin. "The bill also includes free testing, which is critical to containing the spread of this life-threatening virus. The clock is ticking, and if Senator Johnson's obstruction delays or even waters down the bill, it could risk hundreds of thousands of lives."