

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- HEALTHY AND SAFE FAMILIES  
AND WORKPLACES ACT

Introduced By: Senators Vargas, Quezada, Lauria, Bell, Appollonio, Urso, and  
Thompson

Date Introduced: March 04, 2026

Referred To: Senate Labor & Gaming

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 28-57-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 28-57 entitled "Healthy and  
2 Safe Families and Workplaces Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **28-57-6. Use of paid sick and safe leave time.**

4 (a) Paid sick and safe leave time shall be provided to an employee by an employer for:

5 (1) An employee's mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition; an employee's  
6 need for medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury, or health  
7 condition; an employee's need for preventive medical care;

8 (2) Care of a family member with a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition;  
9 care of a family member who needs medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical  
10 illness, injury, or health condition; care of a family member who needs preventive medical care;

11 (3) Closure of the employee's place of business by order of a public official due to a public  
12 health emergency or an employee's need to care for a child whose school or place of care has been  
13 closed by order of a public official due to a public health emergency, or care for oneself or a family  
14 member when it has been determined by the health authorities having jurisdiction or by a healthcare  
15 provider that the employee's or family member's presence in the community may jeopardize the  
16 health of others because of their exposure to a communicable disease, whether or not the employee  
17 or family member has actually contracted the communicable disease; ~~or~~

18 (4) Time off needed when the employee or a member of the employee's family is a victim

1 of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or

2 (5) Donating blood at an approved blood donation program including but not limited to the  
3 Rhode Island Blood Center or any other blood donation program approved by the American  
4 Association of Blood Banks, the American Red Cross, or another nationally recognized blood  
5 donation organization.

6 (i) A full-time employee shall be entitled to take up to four (4) hours of paid blood donation  
7 leave in a calendar year to donate blood through an approved blood donation program.

8 (ii) Blood donation leave shall be paid at the employee's regular rate of pay and shall not  
9 result in the loss of time, pay, or benefits otherwise accrued by the employee.

10 (iii) A full-time employee seeking to take leave for blood donation shall provide reasonable  
11 advance notice to the employer, subject to the operational needs of the employer.

12 (iv) An employer may require the employee to provide written verification from the  
13 approved blood donation program, confirming that the employee donated blood on the date for  
14 which leave was requested.

15 (v) A full-time employee utilizing blood donation leave shall provide documentation to the  
16 employer's human resources department or other designated employer representative, verifying  
17 participation in an approved blood donation program.

18 (vi) No employer shall discharge, threaten, penalize, or otherwise discriminate against an  
19 employee for requesting or taking blood donation leave, in accordance with this section.

20 (vii) This blood donation subsection can only be used once a year.

21 (b) Paid sick and safe leave time shall be provided upon the request of an employee. Such  
22 request may be made orally, in writing, by electronic means, or by any other means acceptable to  
23 the employer. When possible, the request shall include the expected duration of the absence.

24 (c) When the use of paid sick and safe leave time is foreseeable, the employee shall provide  
25 notice of the need for this time to the employer in advance of the use of the sick and safe leave time  
26 and shall make a reasonable effort to schedule the use of sick and safe leave time in a manner that  
27 does not unduly disrupt the operations of the employer.

28 (d) An employer who or that requires notice of the need to use earned paid sick and safe  
29 leave time where the need is not foreseeable shall provide a written policy that contains procedures  
30 for the employee to provide notice. An employer who or that has not provided to the employee a  
31 copy of its written policy for providing such notice shall not deny earned paid sick and safe leave  
32 time to the employee based on noncompliance with such a policy.

33 (e) Unless otherwise in conflict with state or federal law or regulations, an employee may  
34 decide how much sick time to use; provided, however, that an employer may set a minimum

1 increment for the use of sick time, not to exceed four (4) hours per day, provided this minimum  
2 increment is reasonable under the circumstances.

3 (f) For paid sick and safe leave time of more than three (3) consecutive work days, an  
4 employer may require reasonable documentation that the paid sick and safe leave time has been  
5 used for a purpose covered by subsection (a) of this section if the employer has notified the  
6 employee in writing of this requirement in advance of the employee's use of paid sick and safe  
7 time. An employer may not require that the documentation explain the nature of the illness or the  
8 details of the domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking unless required by existing government  
9 regulation or law. Nothing in this provision shall be construed to conflict with existing government  
10 regulation or law.

11 (1) An employer may require written documentation for an employee's use of earned sick  
12 time that occurs within two (2) weeks prior to an employee's final scheduled day of work before  
13 termination of employment.

14 (2) Documentation signed by a healthcare professional indicating that paid sick leave time  
15 is necessary shall be considered reasonable documentation under subsection (a) of this section.

16 (3) One of the following, of the employee's choosing, shall be considered reasonable  
17 documentation of an absence under subsection (a)(4) of this section:

18 (i) An employee's written statement that the employee or the employee's family member  
19 is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking and that the leave taken was for one of  
20 the purposes of subsection (a)(4) of this section;

21 (ii) A police report indicating that the employee or employee's family member was a victim  
22 of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking;

23 (iii) A court document indicating that the employee or employee's family member is  
24 involved in legal action related to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or

25 (iv) A signed statement from a victim and witness advocate affirming that the employee or  
26 employee's family member is receiving services from a victim services organization or is involved  
27 in legal action related to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

28 (g) An employer's requirements for verification may not result in an unreasonable burden  
29 or expense on the employee and may not exceed privacy or verification requirements otherwise  
30 established by law.

31 (h) Paid sick and safe leave cannot be used as an excuse to be late for work without an  
32 authorized purpose.

33 (i) If an employee is committing fraud or abuse by engaging in an activity that is not  
34 consistent with allowable purposes for paid sick and safe leave in this section, an employer may

1 discipline the employee, up to and including termination of employment for misuse of sick leave.

2 (j) If an employee is exhibiting a clear pattern of taking leave on days just before or after a  
3 weekend, vacation, or holiday, an employer may discipline the employee for misuse of paid sick  
4 and safe leave, unless the employee provides reasonable documentation that the paid sick and safe  
5 leave time has been used for a purpose covered by subsection (a) of this section.

6 (k) An employer may not require, as a condition of providing earned paid sick and safe  
7 time under this chapter, that the employee search for or find a replacement worker to cover the  
8 hours during which the employee is using paid sick and safe leave time. However, if an employee  
9 is absent from work for any reason listed in subsection (a) of this section and by mutual consent of  
10 the employer and the employee the employee works an equivalent number of additional hours or  
11 shifts during the same or the next pay period as the hours or shifts not worked due to reasons listed  
12 in subsection (a) of this section, an employee shall not be required to use accrued and earned paid  
13 or unpaid sick time for the employee's absence during that time period, and the employer shall not  
14 be required to pay for sick time taken during the time period.

15 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- HEALTHY AND SAFE FAMILIES  
AND WORKPLACES ACT

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- 1           This act would require employers to provide full-time employees four (4) hours of paid
- 2   leave, once a year to donate blood through an approved blood donation program.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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