

New bill would provide extra 10 days of sick leave in Massachusetts

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Massachusetts workers would receive 80 extra hours, or 10 days, of job-protected paid sick time to use during the COVID-19 crisis, under a bill recently filed by Rep. Paul Donato and Sen. Jason Lewis.

According to the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition, the emergency paid sick time would be available to workers not covered under the sick time provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act – those working for a private employer with more than 500 employees, and those working at health care or residential facilities that have the option to exempt themselves from the federal law. The leave would be available for workers diagnosed with COVID-19, experiencing symptoms of the disease and awaiting a diagnosis, or those who are quarantined or reasonably believe their health is at risk, as well as to care for a family member or roommate with COVID-19.

“In hospitals, grocery stores, and nursing homes, essential workers are doing heroic work fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, but many of our essential workers lack the ability to stay home with pay if they are sick,” Donato said in a statement. “We need to do everything we can to protect Massachusetts workers on the front lines of the pandemic, including passing this legislation to fill in the gaps in the federal response. No worker should feel the need to come to work sick and risk infecting others.”

The bill (HD 5039) was filed on Friday in the House.