

December 12, 2011

To: Interested Parties

Fr: Anzalone Liszt Research

Re: Findings from Paid Sick Days Poll

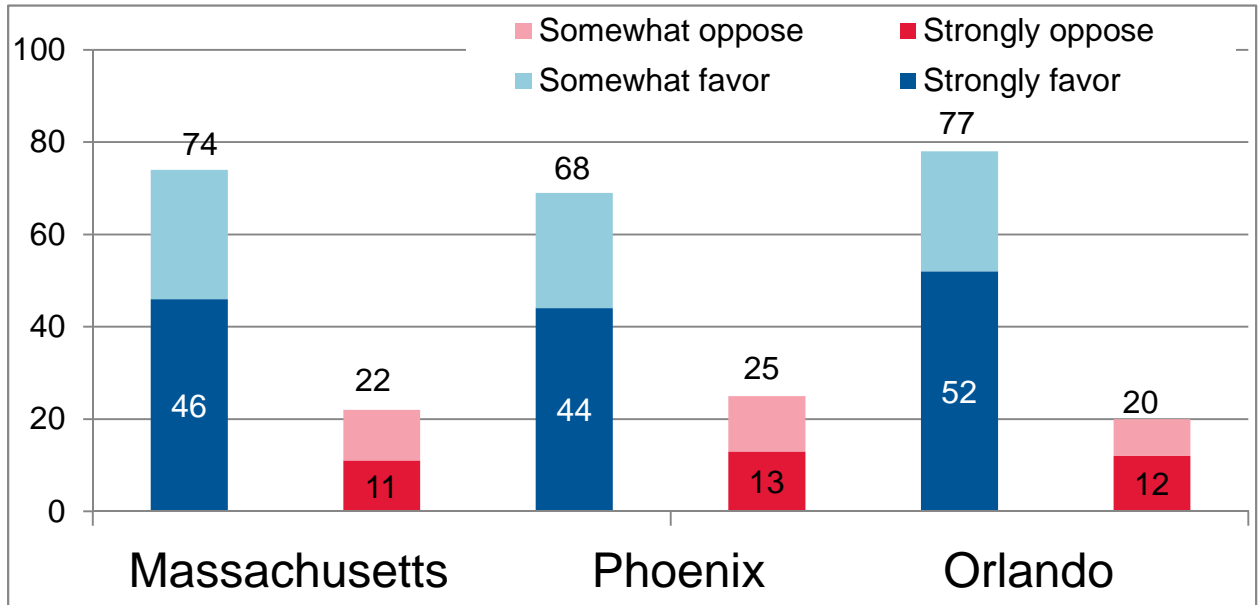
Findings from a recent poll in Orlando, Phoenix, and Massachusetts reveal that voters are incredibly supportive of a law that would allow employees to earn paid sick days. As we have seen in the other places we've polled on this issue, support begins at better than 2:1 in favor of the proposal, and voters are inclined to support elected officials who put their support behind this type of legislation. Beyond this, voters believe that this type of legislation is an important way to improve economic stability for working families, and that officials who get on board with this show that they understand the challenges working families face. To be most effective in maintaining these strong support levels, proponents of this policy need to tie this issue into a broader narrative that connects it to the top-of-mind issues for voters, including personal economic stability and corporate accountability.

The following are key findings and strategic recommendations from the multi-area poll on paid sick days conducted by Anzalone Liszt Research on November 13-16, 2011. The survey was conducted among N=1000 likely 2012 voters with a breakdown of N=400 interviews in Massachusetts, N=300 interviews in Orlando, Florida, and N=300 interviews in Phoenix, Arizona.

Key Findings

1. **Voters most want to hear from candidates about reducing unemployment and creating jobs.** Coming as no surprise, the issue most on voters' minds right now is job creation (87% say that a candidate's position on this issue is very important to them, and 85% say a candidate's position on reducing unemployment is very important). They are going to approach issues that arise in political campaigns through this lens. In the tier behind those issues are taxes and spending (74% very important), healthcare (71% very important), and education (70%).
2. **Support for paid sick days proposals test extremely well in all three locations.** In keeping with the other places where we've polled on this issue, support for a proposal that would allow employees to earn paid sick days from their employer tests at nearly 3:1 support (you say 2:1 above – if that's after they hear the other side's arguments – could you make that clear either above or here? Thanks). Overall, 73% favor the proposal and only 22% oppose. In Massachusetts, voters begin with 74% favor – 22% oppose, in Phoenix voters support it 68% favor – 25% oppose, and in Orlando support is 77% favor – 20% oppose. There is a great deal of intensity among supporters, with nearly half of all voters surveyed strongly favoring it (47%).

Figure 1: Support for Paid Sick Days by Region



Can you order this by strength of support –so African Americans, democrats, unmarried women, etc. Strongest supporters for the proposal are African American voters (93% favor – 6% oppose), middle-aged voters (79% favor – 18% oppose), Hispanics (79% favor – 17% oppose), women under 50 (82% - 15%), Democrats (91% - 5%), and unmarried women (85% - 9%). The majority of Republican voters also supports paid sick days (54% favor – 43% oppose) making this one of the few economic issues that enjoys bipartisan support in these highly partisan times (something like that?).

3. **Elected officials who get behind paid sick days stand to gain support from voters.** A majority of voters are more likely to extend their support to elected officials who get embrace (used onboard above) with this issue. Overall, 53% of voters say that they are more likely to support a candidate who offers their support for the paid sick days proposal, including 24% who say they are *much* more likely to support a candidate. Only 31% of voters would be less likely to support a candidate who supports paid sick days. Beyond this, by a 2:1 margin, voters believe that an official who supports paid sick days *understands the challenges of balancing work and family* (64% agree – 32% disagree with the statement), and that they are *helping give workers some financial stability in a difficult economy* (62% agree – 35% disagree). By a smaller margin, voters also believe that an official who supports this are *on my side* (50% agree – 43% disagree). In Massachusetts the margin is even better on this measure, 52% agree – 40% disagree.

Half of all voters (including 56% in Orlando) also indicate that when issues like paid sick days are discussed as part of campaigns and elections, they are more likely to pay attention, indicating that this could be an engagement tool as part of a larger message

about helping the middle class during tough times.

4. **Opponents' messages do not test as strongly as our positives.** The strongest message against paid sick days is that there are more important issues to focus on right now (30% say the statement makes them much less likely to support it). Following this are specific attacks about the negative implications on the economy (25% much less likely based on the statement that it targets small businesses, and the same portion on the attack that businesses cannot afford this right now).

By comparison, the strongest testing positive message was the public health impact this policy will have (45% much more likely). Following this was giving children the best opportunity for a healthy, successful future (39% much more likely), standing up to big corporations (38%), and helping working families make ends meet (37%). None of the opponents statements test as convincingly as any of the positive statements – even the lowest-testing positive (that this is a small thing that officials can do to ease the burden for people, 31% much more likely) is stronger than the best testing negative.

5. **Even opponents' are open to supporting paid sick days if it includes exemptions for small business.** Our experience in Denver demonstrates voters' sensitivity to taking any action that could jeopardize the health of small businesses. One way to assuage these concerns is to work with the small business community to craft legislation that they can support – including small business exemptions. In fact, among the voters who oppose the paid sick days law (39% after negatives), 41% said that they would be more willing to consider supporting the legislation if it created exemptions for small businesses. This totals approximately 16% of the electorate that would be more willing to support the law if it had carve-outs for small businesses.

Talking Points

- **Top messaging priority – communicate the urgency of this policy.** Voters are quick to understand the health benefits and the impact this legislation has on working families, but slower to understand the urgency. Our biggest challenge is convincing voters to understand the urgency of passing this policy NOW. Voters understand why this is a good policy in theory, but economic concerns override, and our opponents can effectively scare otherwise-supportive voters away by communicating that even though this may be a good idea, it can wait.
- **To convey this urgency, tie this issue into the larger narrative: standing up for the middle class, standing up to big corporations.** Voters are frustrated with large corporations receiving hand-outs and tax breaks, while the middle class and small businesses struggle to stay afloat. By making this about fighting for the middle class, and standing up to the corporations that oppose this, it makes the issue larger than paid sick days.

- *Move away from public health.* While this is a popular reason to support the policy, it does not help foster a feeling of urgency or necessity – up against our opponents’ arguments about the economy, a public health message pales.
 - *Unmasking the multi-billion dollar industries and lobbyists behind the opposition becomes imperative.*
- **Engage small business leaders and respected members of the community to serve as validators for this policy.** We can anticipate that our opponents will cling to the argument that this policy will be bad for business – to effectively combat this, as they did in Connecticut and Philly, we need to be able to point to known and trusted members of the community (specifically the small business community) to deflect this critique and prove that this is a policy that helps small business.
 - *Create exemptions for small businesses to help get them on board and show solidarity with the challenges they face.* Not only will creating reasonable exemptions for small business help attract more local business owners to sign on, but it signals that you are working with them to stay competitive against the large corporations. Small businesses are the new family farm, and voters will be turned off at the notion that a policy hurts them – creating exemptions and working them to craft legislation they can support will go a long way both in terms of gaining allies and persuading voters.
- **Persuade elected officials to elevate this issue by weaving it into their economic platform.** A majority of voters are more likely to extend their support to elected officials who get onboard with this issue, however it can be more powerful as part of the larger economic narrative – standing with the middle class and offering them security, while standing up to large corporate interests. It is incumbent upon us to help tie this issue into a broader economic narrative that can be incorporated into the political discourse this cycle, and will allow voters to make the connection that this issue is part of a bigger solution to the problems we face.

Appendix A: Positive Messages in Support of Paid Sick Days

	Much More Likely
Nearly eighty percent of food service workers in the United States do not receive any paid sick leave. When they go to work sick, they put the public health at risk. The Center for Disease Control found that more than ten million cases of foodborne illness each year are caused by sick restaurant workers contaminating food while they are at work. This proposal is good for public health by keeping sick employees from spreading their illness to the public.	45%
Every family wants the best for their children. But without paid sick days, parents are forced to choose between their family's financial stability and their children's health, and too often they have no choice but to send a child to school sick or skip medical care. This proposal would allow workers to be good employees and good parents - and will let children lead healthier lives, be more successful in school and be better prepared for the future.	39%
The leading opponents to this proposal are large corporations who are making millions in profits while laying off workers, scaling back workers' wages and benefits, and refusing to create new jobs. This proposal looks out for working Americans by requiring that these big corporations provide their workers with the same right to care for their health that they give their C-E-Os.	38%
Nearly one quarter of adults in the US have lost a job or been threatened with job loss for taking time off when sick. Even workers who get to keep their jobs lose a day's pay when they are sick, and they need that money to pay for their housing and buy food. In this tough economy, this proposal is one key step that will help keep workers' jobs more secure and stable, improve workplace standards, and give workers the dignity of being able to provide for their family.	37%
During a time when elected officials are struggling for ways to create jobs and reduce unemployment in [STATE/CITY], this proposal is one direct way to keep good workers in their jobs, give families financial stability, provide flexibility and ease burdens on working families. Elected officials can help working families by passing this proposal.	31%

Appendix B: Negative Messages in Opposition to Paid Sick Days

	Much Less Likely
There are more important issues for politicians to focus on right now than paid sick days. Rather than focusing on this, politicians need to pay more attention to the bigger issues like getting the economy back on track, improving education, and reducing the deficit.	30%
This proposal targets the small businesses that are struggling most in this economy. Most of the companies that do not currently offer paid sick days to their employees are small businesses who cannot afford it. Not only will the added cost hurt these small businesses, but it also saddles them with more government red tape and liability.	25%
Now is not the time to raise costs for businesses. In this tough economy, businesses cannot afford this proposal. It will cost them more money in additional payroll and could force some businesses to lay off employees or even go out of business.	25%
This proposal risks driving businesses out [STATE/CITY]. If this law passes, many companies may move out of state to avoid these additional costs, taking vital jobs with them. And, it deters new businesses from coming here by sending a message to out-of-state businesses that [STATE/CITY] is unfriendly to business.	24%