***This sample letter to the editor requires customization. Edit the bold, italicized text below with your own personal experience, and remove this paragraph, before sending to your local newspaper. Also include your contact information. Many newspapers will only print a letter to the editor after calling the author to verify his or her identity and address. Newspapers don’t give out your contact info or address, but they will usually include your name and city if your letter is published.***

Dear [Newspaper Name] Editor,

You would think that living through a pandemic would move our leaders to ensure that all working North Carolinians have access to paid sick days. Unfortunately – and shockingly – you’d be wrong.

What’s more, a recent report from the North Carolina Justice Center estimated that the lack of paid sick days is costing our state’s economy $8.4 billion a year. With so much on the line in terms of our economic well being and public health, how can we afford NOT to do something?

***This paragraph can be customized to talk about your experience taking paid or unpaid sick days. Your story helps tell our future leaders why paid sick days are important and shows others that they’re not alone. Some prompts are below:***

* ***A 2021 survey showed that two out of three service industry workers came to work sick. That’s not surprising, since low-wage workers are less likely to have paid sick days. This puts their coworkers and their customers at risk. During my time working in [the restaurant industry/the service industry]…***
* ***COVID-19 brought the need for paid sick days into the spotlight, but we still need paid sick days today. In places with paid sick days, rates of illness like the flu are 30 to 40% lower than those without these laws. Recently, I had the experience of…***
* **The lack of paid sick days is costing our state’s businesses $1.7 billion a year. As a North Carolina business owner, I am concerned because…**

Fifteen other states  have passed legislation to guarantee paid sick days for all. It’s time for our elected leaders to take the necessary steps to protect all working people and their families.

Sincerely,

[Your Name, City, Contact information]