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Big Business Anti-Sick Days Mouthpiece Racked Up Over 150 Taxpayer-Funded Sick Days *While State Aide, Steve Baas Used Over 50 Paid Sick Days*

Milwaukee – The paid business lobbyist who has served as the most vocal special interest opponent to allowing more than 120,000 hard-working Milwaukee citizens to earn modest paid sick leave benefits, accumulated 150 full sick days totaling nearly 1,250 hours while an employee of the state legislature.

Steve Baas, the government affairs director for the Milwaukee big business association, racked up over 150 full paid sick days from 1994 to 2005 and used one-third of those taxpayer-financed sick days as an aide to Assembly Republicans such as convicted former Speaker Scott Jensen, according to public records obtained by One Wisconsin Now.

“If Steve Baas is so opposed to paid sick days for Milwaukee workers, he should return the 51 days of sick pay the taxpayers footed for him,” said Scot Ross, One Wisconsin Now Executive Director. “Incredibly, Baas thinks it’s fine for taxpayers to have paid for his sick leave, but it’s not okay to ensure big business allows its hard-working employees to earn leave so they can be productive, healthy employees.”

The independent, non-partisan Institute for Women’s Policy Research determined that allowing all Milwaukee employees to earn paid sick leave would be a \$15 million benefit to local Milwaukee companies and reduce the spread of disease and illness in the workplace.

As part of his anti-sick days effort Baas told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* that not having sick days is “better than not having a job. They won’t have to worry about sick leave if they don’t have a job to take it from.”

The IWPR study showed that 47 percent of Milwaukee’s workforce is currently unable to earn paid sick days. Unlike Baas, who took an average of five full paid sick days per year, half of workers who have paid sick days take none of those days in a given year, according to the study.

IWPR also found letting workers earning paid sick days creates a more stable and profitable business climate, as well as greater economic stability and consistency from employees; fewer workers being fired; improved workplace morale; and reduced cost to taxpayers from public assistance for workers who are let go due to inadequate sick leave.

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One Wisconsin Now is a statewide communications network specializing in effective earned media and online organizing to advance progressive leadership and values.