

Thursday, 23 July 2020

Poll finds 80% support paid pandemic leave

80.8 per cent of Australians want the Morrison Government to provide paid pandemic leave for all workers, according to a new poll conducted for the ACTU.

Paid pandemic leave – which would be in addition to any other leave entitlement, available to all working people and funded by the commonwealth – is essential to allowing workers to get tested and isolate when they need to.

The ACTU is calling for full pay for all working people while they isolate with symptoms to get tested, if they need to isolate because they have been in close contact with someone with the virus, or if they need to quarantine if infected. Such a system would be only operate while the virus is with us.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“This poll shows that the community knows how essential paid pandemic leave is to combatting this crisis. It seems we are all waiting for the Morrison Government to act.

“Recent polls have shown up to 44% of Australian workers have no paid leave because they are in insecure work. Many more have depleted their leave entitlements during the first six months of this pandemic. This is a massive hole in our defences against the pandemic which must be closed.

“It is now abundantly clear that the virus is being spread in workplaces where people are in insecure casual work and have no paid leave.

“Workers who are getting tested and isolating are saving lives and saving jobs, they shouldn’t lose any pay or put their job at risk to do that. We should be thanking and supporting people who are doing the right thing, not punishing them.

“We must take away all disincentives to isolate to get the virus under control. A huge proportion of transmission is happening in workplaces, so it is essential that we facilitate workers staying home when they need to, so that can get tested and isolate.”

“If the government won’t look after people they can’t look after the economy.”

ENDS

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