

**Milwaukee Journal Letters**  
**July, 2008**

**SICK PAY**

**Start at the local level**

The July 6 Journal Sentinel editorial, "When working parent gets sick - and baby, too," got it mostly right - guaranteeing paid sick days to all workers will be good for individual health and public health, help children stay in school and workers keep their jobs and boost productivity and businesses' bottom line. And, yes, we do need a new standard at the federal level.

The question is, how do we win that? By creating models on the local and state levels, as we did with family and medical leave and with minimum wage.

Tim Sheehy, who wrote the Another View, "Paid sick days could make Milwaukee uncompetitive," made the same arguments in 1988 against a state family leave act. He was wrong then, and he's wrong now. Business didn't flee and the sky didn't fall, just as it hasn't in San Francisco and won't in Milwaukee when we pass paid sick days. Now's the time to value families at work.

**Ellen Bravo**  
*Milwaukee*

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**Greed vs. social need**

Here we go again. Unless we bow to every selfish demand of the corporate community in Milwaukee, the end of the world is near.

In the July 6 "Paid sick days could make Milwaukee uncompetitive," Tim Sheehy said that Milwaukee's economic woes are directly related to adequately compensated workers. His corporate lap-dog propositions are actually a big part of why Milwaukee is sliding further and further into a social and economic quagmire.

Milwaukee's greatest era of success happened during a time of Socialist mayors, proactive labor unions, cooperative corporations and an ability for all to join in the success. Since the last of these mayors, Frank Zeidler, 1948-'60, corporations have threatened and demanded and cajoled in a selfish display of non-creative greed that has lowered Milwaukee down the ladder of industrial cities in the United States. Although corporations have been granted huge benefits, and although labor unions have diminishing impact, companies have fled for places where the federal government helped them to move and where lower wages and benefits prevailed.

Please pay attention: The societies that are having the greatest success, have a healthy and happy citizenry and see the future with creative ideas for business and workers alike are those that are social democracies. In the U.S. and in Milwaukee especially, capitalistic greed has become a place to hoard income and benefits for the most wealthy.

**Lester E. Schultz**

*Glendale*

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## **SICK PAY**

### **Employees are people; treat them as such**

Tim Sheehy of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce says that Milwaukee can't mandate paid sick days because it would hurt Milwaukee employers' ability to compete ("Paid sick days could make Milwaukee uncompetitive," July 6 Crossroads). If we follow Sheehy's line of reasoning to its logical conclusion: For maximum profitability, companies should do away with all employee benefits.

It is scarcely a surprise that modern corporations seem to value profits over employee welfare. It wasn't always that way. Some 50 years ago when I was entering the workforce, the company I worked for claimed, "our experienced employees are our most valuable resource." And I believed them - they had good benefits and a profit sharing plan, and they treated us fairly.

Today, too many corporations seem to view their employees as ciphers - warm bodies that can be easily replaced by other warm bodies. What they don't understand is that when an employer treats its employees fairly and equitably, the employees return the loyalty. If a working mother has to choose between her sick child and her job, she gets no sympathy from Sheehy. No mother should be forced to make that choice.

**David Heckenlively**

*Franklin*