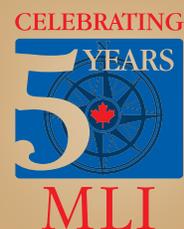


A Sickness in the System

How public sector use of sick leave benefits really compares to the private sector

Philip Cross

NOVEMBER 2015

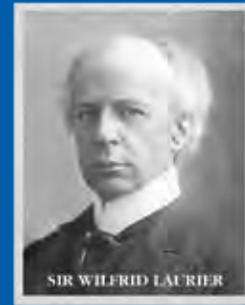


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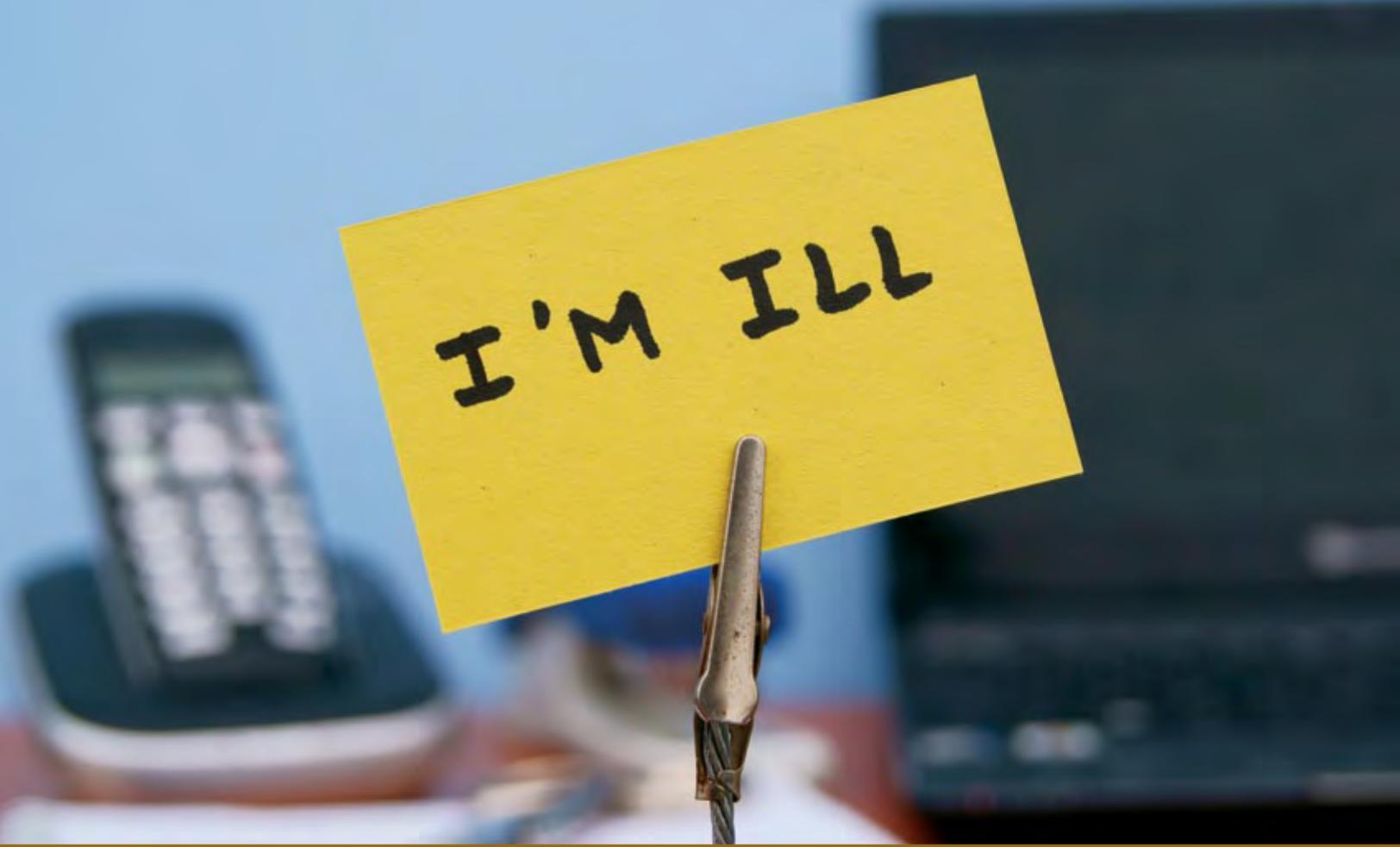


Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2	Reforms to Sick Leave and Disability Proposed by Treasury Board	10
Sommaire	3	Other Leave Benefits for Federal Employees	10
Introduction.....	5	Conclusion	11
Data Sources.....	5	About the Author.....	12
Public Sector Workers Use More Sick Leave than the Private Sector	6	References	13
The Gap in Sick Leave Use Between the Private and Public Sectors is Rising.....	7	Endnotes	13
Managers and Professionals Use Sick Leave the Least.....	9		

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Flickr photo courtesy Sneaky Pie

Executive Summary

Sick leave benefits for federal public employees became an issue in the 2015 federal election campaign, with the Liberal Party stating its opposition to legislation by the previous government that imposed a new sick-leave regime on public servants. The previous government had put reform of sick leave benefits at the centre of the current round of negotiations with all of its unions, including a proposal to reduce the unequal treatment of younger compared with older workers.

Why are sick days such a big issue? A useful contribution to this debate would be to assess how federal public servants use sick days, compared to the private sector, and in the context of other leave benefits.

The results are striking. Federal government employees took an average of 10.5 sick days per year, while private sector employees average 6.4 days.

When you look at the public sector as a whole, including education and health care workers, the average is close to the federal average, with 10.6 sick days taken annually.

The gap between all public servants and private workers has grown dramatically over time. Since data were first collected in 1987, the average sick days used by a public sector worker grew from 7.2 days a year to 10.6 days, with all of the increase occurring after 1995. Conversely, sick leave use in the private sector was virtually the same in 2014 (6.4 days on average) as it was in 1987 (6.1 days).

Looking more closely, people who work indoors in the private sector, the environment most compa-

rable to the public sector, use *less than half* the sick leave of the public sector.

Both the level and trend of sick leave use in the federal government and throughout the public sector is troubling. The research suggests that the most important determinant of sick leave use is whether you are in the public or private sector, not your exposure to possible injury or illness in the workplace.

Examples within occupational groups bear this out. The fact that senior managers invariably take less than 4 sick days off per year, while clerks in business and finance take 9.0 sick leave days, suggests that motivation of the individual to work plays a large role.

Both the level and trend of sick leave use in the federal government and throughout the public sector is troubling.

High pay rates in the public sector have often been justified by employees having high levels of education and training and a large number of professionals and managers. However, in terms of their use of sick leave, public sector employees resemble more clerks and factory workers than professionals and managers.

Federal public servants receive a wide range of leave benefits on top of sick leave, including vacation, statutory holidays, personal and family leave. Combined leave benefits for an employee with 30-years' service amount to 65 days of paid leave, including 15 sick days, out of a possible 260 working days, a staggering 26 percent.

The research suggests a primordial role for motivation and cultural attitudes in taking sick days, rather than biology and medicine. Federal employees have the most generous overall compensation in Canada. Overhauling sick leave would be a small step in re-aligning federal pay and benefits with those of the private sector workers who ultimately pay those benefits.

Sommaire

Le régime des congés de maladie des employés de la fonction publique fédérale est devenu un enjeu de la campagne électorale fédérale de 2015, le Parti libéral s'étant opposé au projet de loi proposé par le précédent gouvernement imposant une réforme. Le précédent gouvernement avait mis cette réforme du régime des congés de maladie au centre de l'actuel cycle de négociations avec tous ses syndicats, y compris une proposition visant à réduire le traitement inégal des jeunes par rapport aux travailleurs plus âgés.

Pourquoi les jours de congé de maladie payés constituent-ils un enjeu si important? Pour contribuer utilement à ce débat, il faut faire le point sur la façon dont les employés de la fonction publique fédérale utilisent leurs jours de congé de maladie en comparaison des employés du secteur privé, et ce, dans le contexte plus large des autres catégories de congés rémunérés.

Les résultats de cet examen sont frappants, les employés du gouvernement fédéral prenant 10,5 jours de congé de maladie payés par an, alors que les employés du secteur privé en prennent 6,4.

La moyenne pour l'ensemble du secteur public est très proche de la moyenne de la fonction publique fédérale, soit 10,6 jours. Le secteur public comprend les travailleurs dans les domaines de l'éducation et de la santé.

L'écart entre les secteurs public et privé s'est élargi de façon spectaculaire au fil du temps. Les données, qui ne sont recueillies que depuis 1987, montrent que les travailleurs du secteur public ont pris en moyenne 10,6 jours de congé payés de maladie en 2014, mais 7,2 jours en 1987, la totalité de l'augmentation étant survenue après 1995. En comparaison, la moyenne est demeurée pratiquement inchangée dans le secteur privé entre 1987 (6,1 jours) et 2014 (6,4 jours).

Les données détaillées révèlent que les jours d'absence pour raison de maladie des employés du secteur privé travaillant à l'intérieur, un environnement très comparable à celui des employés du secteur public, représentent *moins de la moitié* des jours de congé de maladie pris par les employés du secteur public.

Tant le niveau que la tendance des congés de maladie payés au sein du gouvernement fédéral et dans l'ensemble du secteur public sont préoccupants. La recherche suggère que le premier détermi-

nant de l'utilisation des congés de maladie est le secteur dans lequel la personne travaille, soit le secteur public ou privé, et non pas l'exposition aux risques de blessure ou de maladie dans le milieu de travail.

Tant le niveau que la tendance des congés de maladie payés au sein du gouvernement fédéral et dans l'ensemble du secteur public sont préoccupants.

Un examen des tendances à l'intérieur des divers groupes professionnels le confirme. Le fait que le personnel-cadre prend invariablement moins de 4 jours de congé de maladie payés par an, alors que le personnel de bureau dans le secteur Affaires, finance et administration prend 9,0

jours, suggère que la volonté de travailler d'une personne joue un rôle important dans le nombre de congés qu'elle prend.

Les hauts taux de rémunération dans le secteur public ont souvent été justifiés par le fait que les titulaires des postes ont un niveau élevé d'éducation et de formation et qu'un grand nombre d'entre eux sont des professionnels et des gestionnaires. Toutefois, en ce qui a trait aux absences pour raison de maladie, les employés du secteur public se comportent davantage comme le personnel de bureau et les travailleurs d'usine que comme les professionnels et les gestionnaires.

En plus des congés de maladie payés, les fonctionnaires fédéraux bénéficient d'une panoplie d'autres catégories de congés, y compris les vacances, les jours fériés, ainsi que les congés personnels et familiaux. Tous ces congés combinés font en sorte qu'un employé dans la fonction publique fédérale ayant 30 ans d'ancienneté peut prendre jusqu'à 65 jours de congé payés par année, y compris 15 jours de congé de maladie. En proportion des 260 jours normalement ouverts, il s'agit donc d'un pourcentage astronomique de 26 pour cent.

La recherche suggère que la volonté de travailler et les attitudes culturelles à l'égard des jours de congé de maladie priment sur la biologie et la médecine. Les employés fédéraux bénéficient du plus généreux régime de rémunération au Canada. La réforme du régime de congés de maladie constituerait un petit pas en avant dans les efforts pour faire correspondre la rémunération et les avantages sociaux des fonctionnaires fédéraux à ceux des travailleurs du secteur privé, ceux-là mêmes qui financent tous leurs avantages sociaux.

Introduction

The previous federal government had put reform of sick leave benefits at the centre of the current round of negotiations with all its unions, calling for a reduction in the number of sick days, the elimination of banking sick days, and implementing a short-term disability plan. The new government, elected on Oct. 19, 2015, has said that it intends to review this bargaining position before determining whether to maintain it. It is important that this review is rooted in a firm understanding of how the federal government's sick leave benefits are used and the extent to which they compare to benefits available to other public sector workers and those in the private sector. As well, there is an important intergenerational issue in federal sick leave, where the current system favours employees with long seniority at the expense of newer employees.

This study looks at the number of sick days taken by federal employees, how this compares with other public sector workers, and how the public sector compares with the private sector. Overall,

federal workers are comparable to the rest of the public sector in using at least two-thirds and likely nearly twice as much sick leave as the private sector. This paper also reviews the trend of sick leave use, which has risen in the public sector but not in the private sector. The paper then reviews the occupational data on sick leave for additional insights; it finds that the public sector's overall use of sick leave is typical of clerks, not managers and professionals.

The more generous system of sick leave benefits for federal employees is reinforced by other forms of leave. These include vacation leave and statutory holidays, both of which for federal employees are among the most numerous of any employer in Canada. Sick leave is likely more costly to employers than scheduled leave because replacements cannot be planned ahead or because extra staff must be added in anticipation of absences (Dabboussey and Uppal 2012, 3). The latter is more common in the public sector, but reduces productivity.

Data Sources

A quick note on the primary data sources in this study. Most of the data on sick leave are drawn from the labour force survey (LFS) of Statistics Canada. It covers full-time workers except the 2.75 million self-employed. Therefore its estimates for the private sector are likely too high, since the self-employed (who are not covered in these results) work longer hours and retire much later than employees. More generally, smaller organizations have lower rates of absenteeism partly because there is no one to take the place of an absent employee (Stewart 2013).

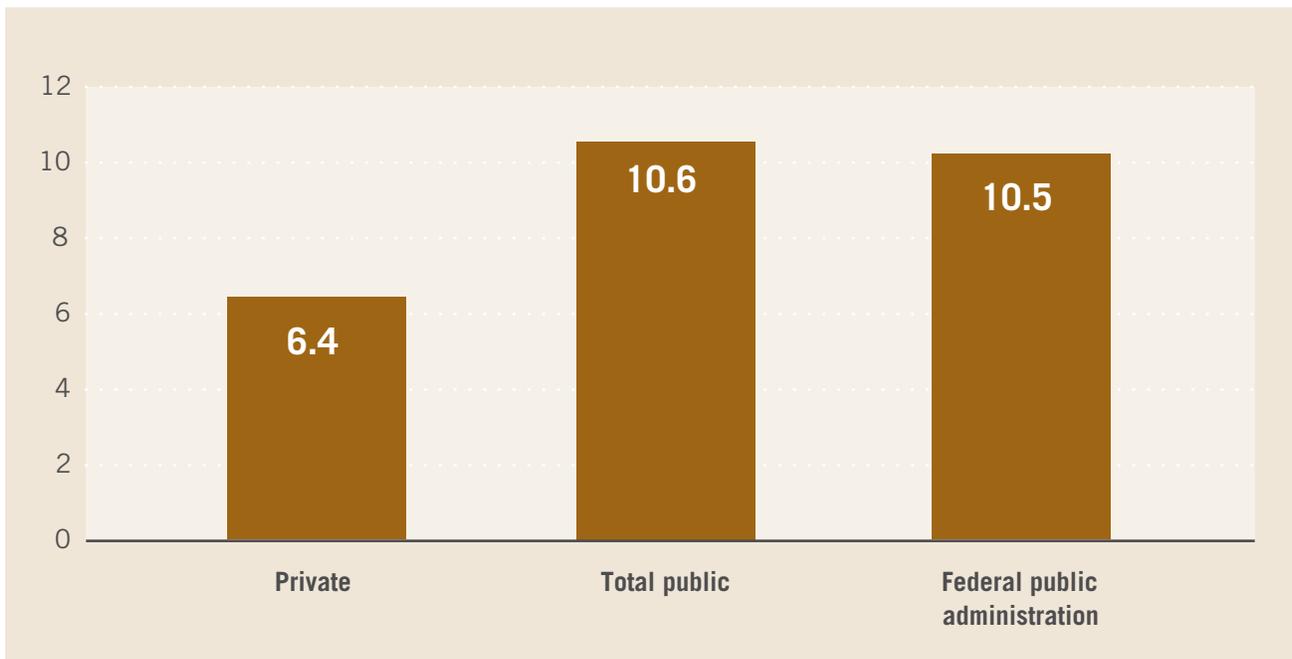
The LFS estimates for the public sector appear to be highly accurate, with its estimate of 10.5 days in the federal civil service closely matching the estimate of 10.3 days made by the Parliamentary Budget Office using detailed estimates from individual departments (Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer 2014, 7). Sick leave data do not include the 6000 federal employees on long-term disability, which would add another 6 days to the overall sick leave total taken by the average federal employee.¹

Overall, federal workers are comparable to the rest of the public sector.

Public Sector Workers Use More Sick Leave than the Private Sector

Federal government employees are like other public sector workers in claiming sick leave much more than workers in the private sector. The public sector as a whole, which includes workers in all levels of government as well as in education and health care,² on average claimed 10.6 days of leave for illness or disability in 2014.³ This is two-thirds greater than the average of 6.4 days for private sector employees (see chart 1).

CHART 1: Average yearly use of sick leave days, private and public sector, 2014



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour force survey

Federal government workers averaged 10.5 days, almost exactly matching the public sector average. Personal leave is used the most by parents with preschool-age children, according to the labour force survey.

Greater use of sick leave than in the private sector was uniform across the public sector. Within public administration, the average of 10.5 days for federal employees was almost matched by their provincial and municipal counterparts, at 9.8 and 9.6 respectively.⁴ Health care industry workers averaged the most with 11.3 days, which may reflect their greater contact not just with the public, but with the part of the population most likely to be ill.

Education workers averaged 8.4 days of sick leave, below the public-sector average (but still high by the standards of the private sector). The lower use of sick leave by education workers may in part reflect how teachers are allowed to cash out some unused sick leave benefits when they retire. Workers in utilities, another industry dominated by public ownership, used the least sick leave among public sector employees at 8.0 days a year.

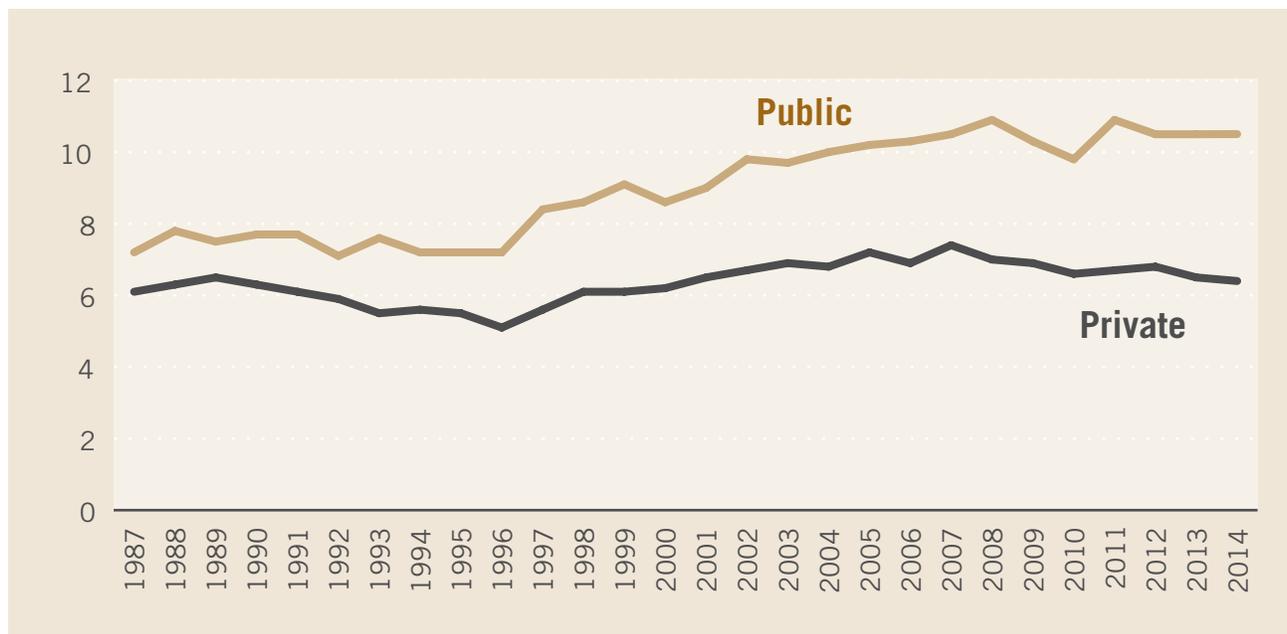
The use of sick leave in the federal government and across the public sector is well above the norm in the private sector despite the greater risk of injury while working in factories or construction sites or working outdoors, compared to indoor office work, as often occurs in agriculture, forestry, mining, and transportation. These industries do have the highest rates of sick leave in the private sector, ranging from 5.8 days for construction to 5.9 days in mining and 7.6 days in manufacturing.

People who work indoors in the private sector, the environment most comparable to the public sector, use less than half the sick leave of the public sector. Business services use the least, with 4.0 days, followed by recreation (5.8), accommodation and food (5.3 days despite constant contact with the public), and 6.6 in trade (where retail workers also have frequent contact with the public). Administrative services are an outlier in the private sector, with 7.0 days of illness.

The Gap in Sick Leave Use Between the Private and Public Sectors is Rising

The trend of sick leave use is also quite different between the private sector and the public sector. Since sectoral data begin in 1987, the average use in the public sector has increased from 7.2 days a year to 10.6 days, with all of the increase occurring after 1995 (see chart 2). Employees in federal public administration also averaged 7.2 days in 1987.

CHART 2: Average yearly use of sick leave days, private and public sector, 1987-2014



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour force survey

Conversely, sick leave use in the private sector was virtually the same in 2014 (6.4 days on average) compared with 1987 (6.1 days). Private sector use declined during the recessions of the early 1990s

and after 2007. This points to employees exercising some discretion in claiming sick leave. Note that aggregate data on the public and private sectors are only available from 1987. The upward trend in sick leave use was widespread across the public sector. Its use in public administration was up 2.5 days since 1987, 3.0 days in health care, and 3.5 days in education.

The role of circumstances specific to an occupation or industry in sick leave use should not be exaggerated. While it would seem natural that people regularly exposed to other people who are frequently ill (such as health care or child care workers) would be sick more often, other industries with high exposure to people such as accommodation and food or retailing use sick leave much less. Nor does it explain why the trend in sick leave claims rose sharply in health and child care. As recently as

The role of circumstances specific to an occupation or industry in sick leave use should not be exaggerated.

1987, sick leave use for child care workers was 5.7 days; its doubling to 10 days in 2014 cannot reflect a sudden outbreak of children carrying new viruses. Similarly, the increase in sick leave use in health care of 3.4 days since 1987 is the second most of any industry (behind only education).

Sick leave use in the private sector has fallen in those industries where its use was most prevalent in 1987. Mining and forestry led the way

with a drop of 1.8 days, followed by manufacturing (down 1.1 days) and construction (off 0.5 days). The declines in these industries may reflect safer working conditions in what are often dangerous environments, and are consistent with falling work injury cases reported to workers' compensation boards (Marshall 2006, 14). The most pronounced increases in the private sector have been in transportation (up 2.2 days) and trade (up 1.7 days). Most other consumer and business services posted increases of about one day over the past 27 years. Again, these services are the most comparable to the indoor environment which public sector workers experience.

Both the level and trend of sick leave use in the federal government and throughout the public sector is troubling. Sick leave use in the public sector is now almost twice the rate in the private sector. The most important determinant of sick leave use is whether you are in the public or the private sector, not your exposure to possible injury or illness in the workplace. It is also revealing that there are important variations within the federal civil service. Treasury Board data show the lowest use of sick leave in highly professional departments like Foreign Affairs and the highest use in blue collar departments like Correctional Services and the Canada Border Services Agency (Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer 2014, 7).

This suggests a primordial role for motivation and cultural attitudes, not biology and medicine. That sick leave is viewed in some federal departments as another form of paid time off is supported by its frequent use on Mondays and Fridays to create long weekends. While Treasury Board says it does not have statistics on such abuse, its frequent use in the civil service is why using sick leave on Fridays is called *vendredi-tite* (roughly translated as *Friday-itis*, a malady covering a range of imagined or fabricated illnesses).

Managers and Professionals Use Sick Leave the Least

Occupational data cannot be broken down between the private and the public sector, but there are some clear trends in how different occupations use sick leave. Senior managers have the lowest use of sick leave of any occupation, invariably taking less than 4 days a year. Clerks, labourers, and support staff take the most sick leave.

Within occupational groups, the same gradient is evident. Clerks in the business and finance group use the most sick leave with 9.0 days, while professionals take the least (5.0 days).⁵ Within health care, professionals take the least with 5.6 days, while support staff claim 13.4 days, the most of any occupational group. The same pattern holds in construction; contractors and supervisors claim 5.9 days of sick leave, while helpers and labourers take 9.6 days. It is not clear whether the lower rate of illness among managers and professionals reflects that they manage their health better (smoking rates are lower among more educated people), the ability to have greater control of their environment (which leads to lower stress), safer working conditions than some occupations, or simply more motivation to go to work.

Workers in restaurants have a below-average rate of 5.8 days a year, supporting the observation that contact with the public alone is not the determining factor. Conversely, public sector workers in contact with the sickest portions of the population have the highest use of sick leave, with an average of 11.6 days for health care occupations and 10.0 days for childcare workers (the occupational definition of health care is slightly different from the industry definition of health care). Teachers are an exception at 7.2 days of sick leave, reflecting their incentive to bank sick leave to cash out upon their retirement.

The large variation in the use of sick leave among occupational groups is further evidence that the motivation of the individual to work plays a large role.

The large variation in the use of sick leave among occupational groups is further evidence that the motivation of the individual to work plays a large role. People who have more control or input over their work environment, such as managers, professionals, and even farmers, use sick leave markedly less than the average. People with repetitive or mundane tasks such as factory workers and clerks both claim about 9 days of sick leave a year.

Another point can be made using the occupational and industrial patterns of sick leave. High pay rates in the public sector are often justified by employees having high levels of education and training and a large number of professionals and managers. However, in terms of their use of sick leave, public sector employees resemble clerks and factory workers more than professionals and managers.

Reforms to Sick Leave and Disability Proposed by Treasury Board

Access to sick leave and disability insurance varies widely throughout the federal government. About one-third of employees had fewer than 20 days of sick leave accumulated (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2015, 2). Meanwhile, only one-third had banked 65 days, a critical yardstick as that is the waiting period before employees can access long-term disability benefits. This also means that two-thirds of employees would face some loss of income waiting to qualify for the existing disability plan, with nearly half facing no income for several months. This is clearly a risk for employees with little seniority who have not had the time to accumulate significant sick leave benefits and for people with chronic but not disabling illnesses or injuries.

The solution proposed by Treasury Board is to reduce the amount of sick leave employees could accumulate, but shorten the wait for when they could be eligible for long-term disability payments. This would be more equitable to employees without substantial seniority while aligning the benefits with the private sector.

Along with reducing the intergenerational inequity of the current system, a shorter time before involving trained professionals in evaluating disability claims would improve due diligence and reduce costs. As it now stands, managers and supervisors are asked to evaluate sick leave claims, for which they have no training. Involving insurance companies in disability claims at an early stage would bring their experience and competence to these issues.

Other Leave Benefits for Federal Employees

All federal employees receive a wide range of leave benefits on top of sick leave, including vacation, statutory holidays, personal, and family leave. Vacation benefits rise from 3 weeks for new employees to 6 weeks for employees with 30 years of service.

Federal employees are eligible for 11 statutory holidays a year: New Year's Day, Good Friday and Easter Monday (most private sector firms grant only one of the two), Victoria Day, Canada Day, the Civic holiday, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Monday, Remembrance Day (which is rarely granted in the private sector), Christmas Day, and Boxing Day. In addition, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve are de facto holidays, when federal employees depart well before noon. This applies even on Fridays when Christmas and New Year's Day fall on a Monday and therefore Friday is not actually Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve. The only major holiday the federal civil service does not receive is Family Day in February, which exists in some provinces.

In recent years, the federal government has granted its employees one day for personal reasons, one day for volunteer work to be used at the discretion of the employee, and five days for family reasons (such as looking after a sick child or aging parent).⁶ Personal leave is used the most by parents with preschool-age children, according to the labour force survey. On average, workers in the public sector took 1.9 days a year for personal or family reasons in 2014, compared with 1.4 days in the private sector, a difference of 36 percent. None of this includes extraordinary leave such as for marriage, bereavement, and so on.

Altogether, a federal employee with 30 years of experience is eligible for 30 days of vacation leave, 15 days of sick leave, 11 statutory holidays, 2 personal or volunteer leave days, 5 days for family leave, and 2 de facto days for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. This amounts to 65 days of paid leave out of a possible 260 working days (52 weeks of 5 working days) – a staggering 26.0 percent. These 65 days off are equivalent to a long weekend every week of the year, plus another three weeks of vacation (using the calculation of a four day work week after the theoretical employee takes a day off every week, the 13 days left over from taking one day a week for 52 weeks amounts to three 4-day weeks with a day to spare). Needless to say, no private sector employer could compete paying its employees to be on leave almost one-quarter of the year.

These 65 days off are equivalent to a long weekend every week of the year.

Avoiding work in the federal civil service is not difficult if that is one's goal, especially if that mindset is encouraged by the powerful federal civil service unions. Senior managers in the civil service know that artful employees in the civil service combine different types of leave with statutory holidays to create very long weekends. When a statutory holiday falls on a Tuesday or Thursday (as can occur for Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Canada Day, or Remembrance Day), a 4-day weekend can be created by the "bridge" of claiming sick or some other type of leave on the Monday or Friday. When the statutory holiday falls on a Wednesday, an "aqueduct" can be constructed by building a bridge to both weekends; for example, by claiming vacation or personal leave for the Monday and Tuesday and sick leave for Thursday and Friday. In this manner, the employee gets nine consecutive days off by claiming only two days of precious vacation or personal leave.

Conclusion

Public sector employees, including federal civil servants, use sick leave at least two-thirds more often than workers in the private sector. This gap has grown over time, as private sector sick leave use has been unchanged while sick leave has risen in the public sector. There is considerable variation in sick leave use by industry, by occupation, and even within different federal ministries. This suggests that individual motivation and cultural attitudes in the workplace are as much a determinant of sick leave use as illness or injury.

Federal employees have the most generous compensation in Canada.

Federal employees have the most generous compensation in Canada. They have the third highest pay scale of any industry, with almost no chance of losing their job (Lee and Cross). Their pension benefits are unparalleled. Benefits for both sick leave and other forms of time off are the most generous of any large employer in Canada.

Seen in this light, an overhaul of federal sick leave benefits could serve as the basis for reforms to re-align federal pay and benefits with those of private sector workers who ultimately pay for these benefits. This could also be fairer for federal employees, many of whom do not have the seniority to be ill or injured for a long period without a significant loss of income before qualifying for disability.

About the Author



Philip Cross is a Senior Fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, a non-partisan Ottawa think tank that promotes better public policy. He is also a member of the Business Cycle Dating Committee at the CD Howe Institute. Before that, he spent 36 years at Statistics Canada, the last few as its Chief Economic Analyst. He wrote Statistics Canada's monthly assessment of the economy for years, as well as many feature articles for the *Canadian Economic Observer*.

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Endnotes

- 1 People on long-term disability in the government are no longer paid by the employer, which is Statistics Canada's criterion for inclusion in the sick leave data. See Dabboussy and Uppal (2012), p 5.
- 2 According to the labour force survey, total employment in public administration, health, and education was 4.5 million in October 2015, while total public sector employment was 3.6 million. The difference reflects that while all public administration is in the public sector, parts of education and especially health care are operated by the private sector.
- 3 All the data for the public sector and private sector is from Statistics Canada, Cansim Table 279-0035 and covers only full-time employees. Starting in 2015, labour force data on leave benefits will be updated only for the 279 matrix, while the relevant 282 matrix series are terminated. This study uses both, since it uses data only through 2014.
- 4 The detailed industry data are all from the labour force survey of Statistics Canada, Cansim Table 282-0029.
- 5 The data in this paragraph are for 2011 and come from Dabboussy and Uppal (2012, Table 4), who provide a finer level of detail than what is available on Cansim.
- 6 Maternity leave was included in personal leave until 1997.

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- Cited by five present and former Canadian Prime Ministers, as well as by David Cameron, the British Prime Minister.
- First book, *The Canadian Century: Moving out of America's Shadow*, won the Sir Antony Fisher International Memorial Award in 2011.
- *Hill Times* says Brian Lee Crowley is one of the 100 most influential people in Ottawa.
- The *Wall Street Journal*, the *Economist*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *National Post* and many other leading national and international publications have quoted the Institute's work.



"The study by Brian Lee Crowley and Ken Coates is a 'home run'. The analysis by Douglas Bland will make many uncomfortable but it is a wake up call that must be read."

FORMER CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER PAUL MARTIN ON MLI'S PROJECT ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND THE NATURAL RESOURCE ECONOMY.

Ideas Change the World

Independent and non-partisan, the Macdonald-Laurier Institute is increasingly recognized as the thought leader on national issues in Canada, prodding governments, opinion leaders and the general public to accept nothing but the very best public policy solutions for the challenges Canada faces.



About the Macdonald-Laurier Institute

What Do We Do?

When you change how people think, you change what they want and how they act. That is why thought leadership is essential in every field. At MLI, we strip away the complexity that makes policy issues unintelligible and present them in a way that leads to action, to better quality policy decisions, to more effective government, and to a more focused pursuit of the national interest of all Canadians. MLI is the only non-partisan, independent national public policy think tank based in Ottawa that focuses on the full range of issues that fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

What Is in a Name?

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute exists not merely to burnish the splendid legacy of two towering figures in Canadian history – Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier – but to renew that legacy. A Tory and a Grit, an English speaker and a French speaker – these two men represent the very best of Canada’s fine political tradition. As prime minister, each championed the values that led to Canada assuming her place as one of the world’s leading democracies.

We will continue to vigorously uphold these values, the cornerstones of our nation.



Working for a Better Canada

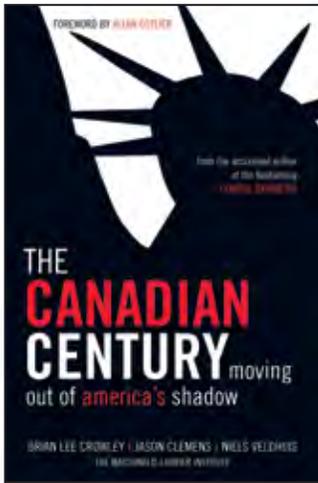
Good policy doesn’t just happen; it requires good ideas, hard work, and being in the right place at the right time. In other words, it requires MLI. We pride ourselves on independence, and accept no funding from the government for our research. If you value our work and if you believe in the possibility of a better Canada, consider making a tax-deductible donation. The Macdonald-Laurier Institute is a registered charity.

Our Issues

The Institute undertakes an impressive programme of thought leadership on public policy. Some of the issues we have tackled recently include:

- Aboriginal people and the management of our natural resources;
- Getting the most out of our petroleum resources;
- Ensuring students have the skills employers need;
- Controlling government debt at all levels;
- The vulnerability of Canada’s critical infrastructure;
- Ottawa’s regulation of foreign investment; and
- How to fix Canadian health care.

Macdonald-Laurier Institute Publications

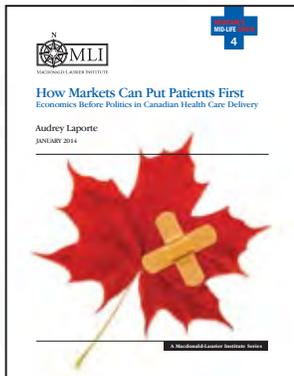


Winner of the Sir Antony Fisher International Memorial Award BEST THINK TANK BOOK IN 2011, as awarded by the Atlas Economic Research Foundation.

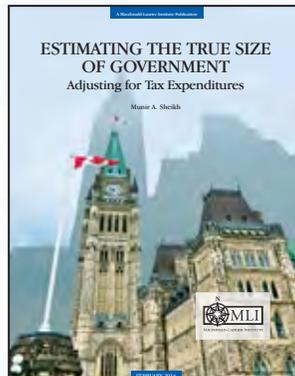
The Canadian Century
By Brian Lee Crowley,
Jason Clemens, and Niels Veldhuis

Do you want to be first to hear about new policy initiatives? Get the inside scoop on upcoming events? Visit our website www.MacdonaldLaurier.ca and sign up for our newsletter.

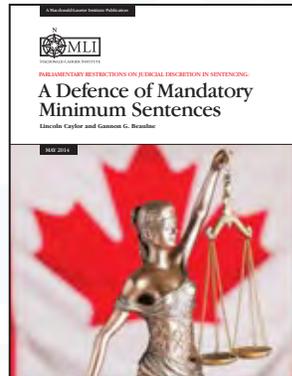
RESEARCH PAPERS



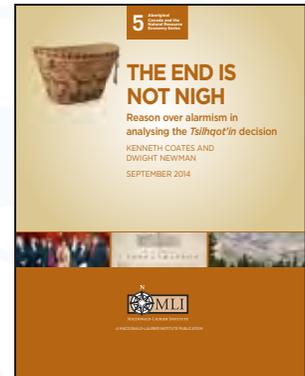
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Audrey Laporte



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Munir A. Sheikh



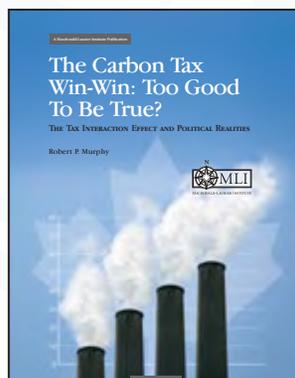
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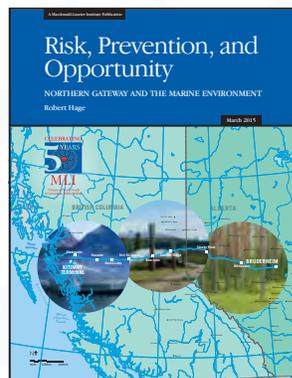
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Dwight Newman



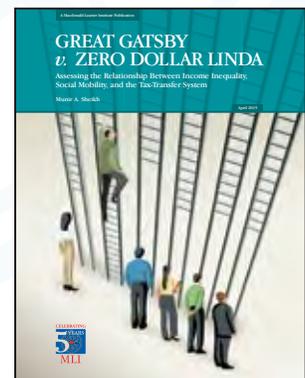
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Kenneth S. Coates



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Robert P. Murphy



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Robert Hage



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Munir A. Sheikh

CELEBRATING



MLI

5 years of True North in Canadian Public Policy

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What people are saying about the Macdonald- Laurier Institute

In five short years, the institute has established itself as a steady source of high-quality research and thoughtful policy analysis here in our nation's capital. Inspired by Canada's deep-rooted intellectual tradition of ordered liberty – as exemplified by Macdonald and Laurier – the institute is making unique contributions to federal public policy and discourse. Please accept my best wishes for a memorable anniversary celebration and continued success.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute is an important source of fact and opinion for so many, including me. Everything they tackle is accomplished in great depth and furthers the public policy debate in Canada. Happy Anniversary, this is but the beginning.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PAUL MARTIN

In its mere five years of existence, the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, under the erudite Brian Lee Crowley's vibrant leadership, has, through its various publications and public events, forged a reputation for brilliance and originality in areas of vital concern to Canadians: from all aspects of the economy to health care reform, aboriginal affairs, justice, and national security.

BARBARA KAY, NATIONAL POST COLUMNIST

Intelligent and informed debate contributes to a stronger, healthier and more competitive Canadian society. In five short years the Macdonald-Laurier Institute has emerged as a significant and respected voice in the shaping of public policy. On a wide range of issues important to our country's future, Brian Lee Crowley and his team are making a difference.

JOHN MANLEY, CEO COUNCIL
