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Many of you are probably thinking about, or are starting to plan, a summer vacation. But, did you know there are lots of workers out there who have no vacation time at all?

Yep, vacation is not required in this country. Neither is holiday time off with pay.

And for those of us who get paid vacation, the offering is pretty pathetic. Among the world's industrialized nations, the United States ranks [9th behind Korea](#) for goodness sake. And we're one of the only countries that does not mandate even one day off a year for vacation.

One legislator has been trying to change that.

Last May, [Rep. Alan Grayson](#), D-Fl, introduced the "Paid Vacation Act of 2009" and it calls for providing a week of paid vacation.

This from [Politico.com](#):

"There's a reason why Disney World is the happiest place on Earth: The people who go there are on vacation," said Grayson, a freshman who counts Orlando as part of his home district. "Honestly, as much as I appreciate this job and as much as I enjoy it, the best days of my life are and always have been the days I'm on vacation."

According to the Center for Economic and Policy Research, 28 million Americans — or about a quarter of the work force — don't get any paid vacation. The center says that a lack of vacation causes stress and workplace burnout and that those evil twins cost the economy more than \$300 billion each year.

So, Grayson will get Mickey points if such a bill passes, but I don't care. It's a great idea.

Here's a summary of the bill:

(1) upon enactment of this Act, each employer who employs 100 or more employees to provide each employee one week of paid vacation during each 12-month period; and (2) beginning three years after enactment of this Act, each employer who employs 50 or more employees to provide each employee one week of paid vacation during each 12-month period, and each employer that employs 100 or more employees to provide each

employee two weeks paid vacation during each 12-month period, beginning on the employee's first anniversary of employment.

(I have a request in to Grayson's office to see where the bill stands right now and will update my blog when I get the information.)

We all know [how important vacation is for our minds and bodies](#). Having time off to decompress helps employees and employers. Clearly, workers are more productive after they get some R&R.

If you're one of those lucky ones who already has vacation, you may be thinking, "why the heck do you need a law to mandate this?"

Well, you may have vacation now, but there is nothing to stop your employer from cutting back your vacation days, or getting rid of them all together.

I just got an email from Dana H. asking me what her rights were in this regard:

I work 40 hours a week for a company that provides retail construction and merchandising services. I am a merchandiser that works in one store forty hours a week. When I started with this company I had paid holidays and vacation accrual. After I was employed there for less than year they took away the vacation and found a way to pay only one holiday a year.

There are some nuances to this depending on the state where you live, according to [Heather McCloskey, with McCloskey Partners](#), LLC, a Human Resource Solution Provider:

If an employer offered Vacation paid time off and at some point, lets say mid-year, changes their policy and stops providing paid vacation days, the employee is still due to either be able to use the days accrued/unused or be paid out for the vacation hours that were accrued/unused prior to the change in the policy.

Each state has its own law when it comes to vacation pay outs so I recommend that you inform your readers to each their states DOL website to find out what the specific state law is for their specific state.

Vacation paid time off hours are considered earned income and that is why the employer is due to either allow the employee to use what they accrued prior to the policy change or pay the employee out for the hours they accrued.

Unfortunately, this is probably not going to help Dana in the long term because the firm just got rid of vacation time altogether.

Dana's issue was one of those that really hits me hard because I had to tell her she was out of luck.

This was my response:

Unfortunately, there is no requirement under federal law that your employer provide you with vacation pay or for vacation time off. The same goes for holidays. (Here's [a link to the Department of Labor](#) reference on this.)

If, however, you have a contract with your employer that states you were to be given X number of vacation or holidays off with pay then that's another matter. Otherwise, there is no law that mandates vacation and holiday pay.

Sorry the news isn't better.

It is crummy on the part of your employer to take this benefit away from you. Maybe it's time you started looking for a new job.

Of course, there is no guarantee her next employer will offer any paid vacation. That is, until a law passes requiring such an important perk.

What do you all think? Should vacation time be mandated?