

## ***Paid Sick Time -- An Essential Benefit for All New Yorkers***

### ***Why Do We Need a Paid Sick Time Law?***

**At least one million workers in New York City do not get a single day of paid sick time<sup>i</sup> Those least likely to have paid sick days include:**

- low-income workers who can least afford to lose their pay or risk losing their jobs;
- workers in small businesses;
- low income single mothers;
- food handlers, child care providers, home care aides for the aged and retail workers.

According to surveys  
**91% of restaurant workers** in New York City lack paid sick time.<sup>ii</sup>

**And one in six workers reports that they or a family member have been suspended, fired or disciplined for taking time off due to illness.<sup>iii</sup>**

### ***What Would a Paid Sick Time Bill Do?***

**Guarantee that all workers in New York City can earn some paid sick time.**

Workers earn up to **72 hours of paid sick leave per year** if their employer has 10 or more employees. Small businesses are only required to allow workers to earn 40 hours per year.

- Workers earn 1 hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked.
- Workers can roll over unused paid sick time BUT employers are never required to give more than 72 hours a year (or 40 hrs for small businesses).
- Workers must work for 90 days before they can take paid sick time.
- Workers can use paid sick time:
  - For their own mental or physical illness or diagnosis or preventive care;
  - To deal with issues related to domestic violence;
  - To care for an ill spouse, child, parent, grandparent, domestic partner;
  - If a public official closes a school or place of business due to a public health emergency.
- Retaliation is prohibited;
- The bill includes judicial and administrative remedies.

### **Make it easier for employers to do the right thing.**

- A paid sick time law levels the playing field so employers who provide paid sick time are no longer at a disadvantage.
- Employers will not have to change their policies if they already offer the same amount of paid time off or vacation days that can be used when an employee is ill.
- Employers are not required to pay for unused paid sick time when an employee leaves.
- Risk of abuse is low – employers can require proof of illness after a 3 day absence.
- Employers can – but are not required – to have better policies than those in the bill.

## ***Is Paid Sick Time Important for Public Health?***

### **Paid sick days are critical for the health of all New Yorkers:**

- Workers without paid sick days are more likely to work sick, spreading disease and jeopardizing their own health.
- Paid sick time makes it easier for New Yorkers to care for their aging parents.
- Workers with health insurance but no paid sick days are more likely to use the emergency room.
- Sick children recover more quickly with parental care. Parents are five times more likely to care for sick children at home if they have paid sick time.

## ***Does Paid Sick Time Hurt Business?***

### **No! Paid sick time is good for business.**

- Providing paid sick time saves money.
  - Workers don't work sick. Sick workers have lower productivity, make mistakes, and spread illness in the workplace.
  - Paid sick time lowers turnover and saves costs of hiring and training new workers.
- Some businesses pay overtime or hire replacement workers, but usually co-workers fill in or the employees catch up on their work when they return.
- A rigorous analysis by outside experts (the Institute for Women's Policy Research) estimates that the cost to businesses will be small -- \$.27 per hr for larger businesses; \$.19 for smaller businesses.

**San Francisco has had a similar paid sick time law in effect since 2007. It has caused no ill effects on the local economy.**

## ***Does the Public Support A Paid Sick Time Requirement?***

### **OVERWHELMINGLY!!**

- Three out of four New Yorkers favor a paid sick time law, even when they are presented with all the opposing arguments.<sup>iv</sup>
- The Public Health Association of New York and a growing list of leading physicians and public health experts have endorsed paid sick days.
- *The New York Times* has come out in support of legislation guaranteeing all Americans a minimum number of paid sick days. (Editorial, May 5, 2009).

**“Paid sick time is not a favor. It’s a necessary protection for workers, businesses, and everyday people who want their food and security in healthy hands.”**  
- *El Diario*, Nov. 25, 2006

<sup>i</sup> Estimates by Community Service Society of New York (CSS) and Vicky Lovell, IWPR based on The Unheard Third 2008 and 2009, Survey of New York City residents by Community Service Society of New York (CSS)

<sup>ii</sup> “Burned: high Risks and Low Benefits for Workers in the New York City Restaurant Industry” by the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC-NY), Restaurant Opportunities Centers United and the New York City Restaurant Industry Coalition, September 11, 2009.

<sup>iii</sup> A Health Impact Assessment of the Healthy Families Act of 2009, Summary of Findings, June 11, 2009, (HIA) prepared by Human Impact Partners.

<sup>iv</sup> The Unheard Third 2007, CSS.