



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 28, 2014

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Newark City Council Passes Earned Sick Days Ordinance Momentum Continues to Grow for Statewide Bill

Newark – Adding to the growing number of cities and states that ensure working people are able to take time off when they are sick, the Newark City Council in a 5-0 vote passed Earned Sick Days legislation this morning guaranteeing the right of workers to earn paid sick days. Newark becomes the seventh city in the country to adopt such a law. Over 38,000 private sector Newark Workers, previously unprotected, will now be able to take sick days without the fear of job loss.

“Today is a historic day in Newark, said Phyllis Salowe-Kaye, director of NJ Citizen Action and member of the New Jersey Time to Care Coalition. Newark workers are no longer one flu away from getting fired. With this victory in hand, we are marching to Trenton to make sure the 1.2 million workers in New Jersey without earned sick days are able to get them. We thank Councilman Anibal Ramos, Mayor Quintana and the Newark City Council for fighting to ensure that all Newark working families will be guaranteed a basic standard of earned sick days.”

The Newark bill would allow private-sector workers to earn 1 hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked. Those that work in businesses with 10 or more employees can earn 5 paid sick days per year; workers in businesses with nine or fewer employees would be eligible to earn 3 paid sick days per year. In addition, employees who provide services in direct contact with the public, such as food-service, child or elder care workers, will be eligible to earn 5 sick days regardless of business size. Workers will be able to use their earned sick days to care for their own health needs and those of immediate family members such as a spouse, child, sibling, parent, grandparent, and grandchild. The ordinance also allows for a cash out provision at the employer’s discretion but there is no carry forward.

The diverse coalition of civic organizations, labor unions, and small business owners that helped pass similar measure in September, 2013 in Jersey City expressed their gratitude to the council members for having the courage to stay strong even in the face of opposition. This ordinance will bolster Newark’s economy, protect its public health, and chart a path forward for bringing paid sick days legislation statewide.

“Research has consistently shown that earned sick days laws benefit employers, employees and consumers alike,” said Karen White, Director of the Working Families Program at the Rutgers Center for Women and Work and representative member of the NJ Time to Care Coalition. “In San Francisco, where they’ve had earned sick days policy since 2007, businesses have come to support the law by wide margins, and a recent report from the Washington Main Street Alliance found no negative impact from Seattle’s earned sick days law passed last year. Also initial findings from research done in Connecticut shows a year after implementation of their Earned Sick Days law shows little to no impact on businesses.”

By passing this bill into law, Newark joins Jersey City as the second city in New Jersey and seventh nationwide that supports earned sick days as a policy that strengthens the economy and keeps people in their jobs.

Passage of earned sick days ordinance in Newark is just the latest development in what has been a landmark year for earned sick days legislation in New Jersey and around the country. This year alone, [Portland, Oregon](#) and [New York City](#) and Jersey City became the fourth, fifth, and sixth cities to adopt earned sick days laws.

The [New Jersey Time to Care Coalition](#) will continue to raise awareness of the need for an earned sick days policy in all communities and with our state lawmakers so that all workers in New Jersey have earned sick days. **We thank Councilman Anibal Ramos and the Newark City Council for their support of earned sick days for Newark's working families,**

New Jersey Time to Care Coalition is a broad-based group of over 100 community, advocacy, union, religious, research, and academic organizations working to support policies that strengthen communities by ensuring that working families can balance their responsibilities at home and on the job. Visit us on the web at: njtimetocare.org