



For Immediate Release Friday, January 24, 2014

**Contact: Rob Duffey, (973) 273-3363 or rob@njworkingfamilies.org
Okenfe Lebarty, (917) 776-5631 or Okenfe@njcitizenaction.org**

COALITION CELEBRATES AS JERSEY CITY BECOMES 1ST CITY IN NEW JERSEY TO GUARANTEE PAID SICK DAYS FOR WORKERS

JERSEY CITY – A diverse coalition of labor and community organizations celebrated as legislation guaranteeing paid sick days for workers in Jersey City goes into effect, saying the newly enacted ordinance will benefit the city’s workers and its economy. The ordinance, signed by Mayor Steven Fulop in October, makes Jersey City the first city in the state to pass a paid sick days law.

“I am proud to say that today Jersey City is a better place to live and work,” said Mayor Steven Fulop. “Our city’s workers and their families need the basic economic security that paid sick days provide, and I hope that elected officials around New Jersey and nationwide will follow our example.”

Jersey City officially joins five other cities – Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Seattle; New York City; and Portland, Oregon – that have taken action to help boost the economy by making sure workers can hang on to critical income when ill. Last month Washington, D.C. expanded their existing paid sick days law to cover all workers and New York City is in the process of strengthening their own law.

“Thanks to the vision and leadership of Mayor Fulop and the City Council over 30,000 Jersey City workers will no longer have to fear getting a pink slip the next time they catch the flu,” said Phyllis Salowe-Kaye, executive director of the New Jersey Citizen Action and spokesperson for the New Jersey Time to Care Coalition. “This law respects the dignity of workers, protects the public health and will mean savings for businesses big and small. When workers can earn sick days, everybody wins.”

Next week the City of Newark is expected to pass a paid sick days law that will cover virtually all private sector workers, and a statewide bill has been introduced by Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg.

“Today is a big day for Jersey City workers, and it’s an incredibly hopeful sign for the more than a million workers around New Jersey who must still choose between their paycheck and their health,” said Analilia Mejia, executive director of the New Jersey Working Families Alliance. “We can’t afford to rest on our laurels: our coalition plans to build on the momentum from Jersey City and fight to make sure that each and every worker in the state can earn sick days to care for themselves or their families.”

A study will assess the impact of the ordinance on businesses, workers, and the city’s economy during its first year of implementation.

Coalition members that worked to advance earned sick days in Jersey City and Newark include the New Jersey Time to Care Coalition, the New Jersey Working Families Alliance, SEIU 32BJ, New Jersey Communities United, New Jersey Citizen Action, New Jersey Main Street Alliance, 1199 SEIU, AARP-NJ, AFSCME Council 1, the ACLU of New Jersey, American Federation of Teachers-NJ, Union of Rutgers Administrators AFT, CWA District 1, CWA 1036, CWA 1037, the Committee of Interns and Residents SEIU, Health Professionals and Allied Employees AFT, Food & Water Watch NJ, La Casa de Don Pedro, the Laundry Workers Center, MoveOn Hudson Chapter, the National Organization for Women-NJ, the New Jersey NAACP, New Labor, the People’s Organization for Progress and the SEIU NJ State Council.