



October 4, 2016

Board of Commissioners of Cook County
c/o Secretary to the Board of Commissioners
118 N Clark St., Suite 567
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: Proposed Ordinance 16-4229, Establishing Earned Sick Leave for Employees in Cook County

Honorable Commissioners:

The National Partnership for Women & Families strongly supports proposed ordinance 16-4229, which would enable employees in Cook County to earn and use paid sick time. The National Partnership is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. For more than four decades, we have fought for every major federal policy and many state and local advances that have helped women and families. We promote fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care, and policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family. For more than a decade, we have provided policy and technical assistance related to paid sick days to advocates and legislators. We have helped develop policy in dozens of jurisdictions, including in nearly all of the 36 jurisdictions that have adopted paid sick days laws. We have also studied and analyzed the impacts of paid sick days laws, as well as the concerns that are often raised and that have been proven unfounded, and we understand the positive impacts that these laws have had.

It is time for the Cook County Board of Commissioners to enact a countywide paid sick days standard. We urge the Board to **advance without delay the proposed Ordinance 16-4229, Establishing Earned Sick Leave for Employees in Cook County**. By approving this ordinance, Cook County would join the more than two dozen other localities across the country that have already passed paid sick days ordinances to address the needs of their workforces and to protect the health of their communities.

We call on the Board to move forward swiftly to protect public health through the establishment of a paid sick days standard. Sick employees without access to paid sick days are 1.5 times more likely to go to work with a contagious illness, risking public health and lost productivity.¹ Between September and November 2009 – peak months of the H1N1 flu pandemic that year – nearly eight million workers went to work sick, and may have infected seven million of their co-workers.² Furthermore, when workers go to work sick, they perform at reduced capacity, a problem known as presenteeism that costs the national economy approximately \$160 billion annually (\$206.6 billion after adjusting for inflation).³

And evidence demonstrates that paid sick days laws do not negatively impact local economies. **In fact, economic data from San Francisco, Connecticut, Seattle and New York**

City, where workers earn five to nine paid sick days per year, shows that their economies have thrived since the passage of paid sick days laws.⁴ Employers in San Francisco⁵ and Connecticut⁶ – the first city and the first state to pass paid sick days laws in the nation – reported that they did not experience negative effects as a result of their respective laws. And in the District of Columbia, an audit found no evidence that the paid sick days law caused businesses to leave the city, and the law has been expanded since it was passed.⁷

We urge you to join the three dozen jurisdictions with paid sick days by passing proposed ordinance 16-4229. The law will benefit Cook County's workers and families, protect the public health and bolster the local economy.

Sincerely,

Sarah Fleisch Fink
Director of Workplace Policy and Senior Counsel
National Partnership for Women & Families

1 National Partnership for Women & Families. (2013, April). *Paid Sick Days Improve Our Public Health*. Retrieved 3 October 2016, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/psd/paid-sick-days-improve-our-public-health.pdf>

2 Drago, R., & Miller, K. (2010, February). *Sick at Work: Infected Employees in the Workplace During the H1N1 Pandemic*. Institute for Women's Policy Research Publication. Retrieved 3 October 2016, from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/sick-at-work-infected-employees-in-the-workplace-during-the-h1n1-pandemic>

3 Stewart, W. F., Ricci, J. A., Chee, E., & Morganstein, D. (2003, December). Lost Productive Work Time Costs From Health Conditions in the United States: Results From the American Productivity Audit. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 45(12), 1234-1246. Retrieved 3 October 2016, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/psd/lost-productive-work-time-american-productivity-audit.pdf> (Unpublished calculation based on \$226 billion annually in lost productivity, 71 percent due to presenteeism.)

4 National Partnership for Women & Families. (2015, November). *Paid Sick Days: Low Cost, High Reward for Workers, Employers and Communities*. Retrieved 3 October 2016, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/psd/paid-sick-days-low-cost-high-reward.pdf>

5 Drago, R., & Lovell, V. (2011, February). *San Francisco's Paid Sick Leave Ordinance: Outcomes for Employers and Employees*. Institute for Women's Policy Research Publication. Retrieved 3 October 2016, from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/San-Fran-PSD>

6 Appelbaum, E., Milkman, R., Elliott, L., & Kroeger, T. (2014, March). *Good for Business? Connecticut's Paid Sick Leave Law*. Center for Economic and Policy Research and The Murphy Institute at the City University of New York Publication. Retrieved 3 October 2016, from <http://cepr.net/documents/good-for-buisness-2014-02-21.pdf>

7 Branche, Y. (2013, June 19). *Audit of the Accrued Sick and Safe Leave Act of 2008*. Office of the District of Columbia Auditor Publication. Retrieved 3 October 2016, from <http://www.dcauditor.org/sites/default/files/DCA092013.pdf>