



The Wrigley Building  
410 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 900  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
P / (312) 494 6700  
[www.chicagolandchamber.org](http://www.chicagolandchamber.org)

**RE: Chicagoland Chamber's Opposition to 16-4229: "Earned Sick Leave"**

October 4, 2016

Dear Commissioner Morrison:

The Chicagoland Chamber is opposed to the proposed "earned sick leave" ordinance (16-4229).

The Chicagoland Chamber opposes the proposed earned sick leave ordinance out of principle, as it puts employers at a competitive disadvantage by creating a complex and unnecessary patchwork of labor laws that employers must administrate and follow.

The Chamber has been consistent on two things: 1) policies such as this ordinance cannot be viewed in a policy vacuum; and, 2) the employer community wishes to be a responsible partner in righting the fiscal ship of the County, but is not also willing to absorb additional costs related to expensive mandates. This combined burden and cost greatly diminish any potential monies for investment and new jobs by those same employers, while creating continuing uncertainty regarding the economic climate of Cook County. This does nothing to foster local economic development and diminishes employment options and opportunities for the citizens of Cook County.

Given the political realities surrounding this issue, the Chamber proposed logical adjustments to make this ordinance less harmful to the employer community and easier to implement without diminishing or substantively changing the ultimate goal of the ordinance. Unfortunately, the ordinance as currently written fails to address our concerns. The proposed ordinance duplicates the City of Chicago's poorly drafted, complex, and ambiguous ordinance that was passed this summer over the business community's stated concerns.

For example, this ordinance requires employers to track a separate "12 month period" for each individual employee when administering benefits, rather than allowing the employer to use a single fixed benefit start date for all of its employees. This change would not impact any of the actual benefits an employee receives, but would enable employers to more easily implement this ordinance.

In addition, the ambiguity surrounding several sections of the ordinance create great uncertainty on an employer's ability to comprehend and comply with the law, especially if they are already providing the same amount of benefits. Combine this ambiguity with the private right of action that is also included, and it is a recipe for needless and costly litigation for employers that could have been addressed in the legislative drafting process. Costs that will not go toward reinvesting in their business and hiring more people to work.

Finally, the cost cited in the "whereas" portion of the ordinance is based on a certain set of assumptions and is neither a reliable nor ironclad cost assessment: 1) it fails to account for a variety of variables that could otherwise increase the alleged cost and includes average inputs that do not reflect the realities of cost of doing business for many Cook County



The Wrigley Building  
410 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 900  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

P / (312) 494 6700

[www.chicagolandchamber.org](http://www.chicagolandchamber.org)

employers; and similarly, 2) it views this ordinance through a lens which fails to account for the many policies that have come before it which add extra costs on employers in all industries and of all sizes throughout Cook County.

These are three of many examples that the Chamber has brought to the attention members of the Cook County Board. We are disappointed that our concerns regarding this ordinance were not considered and our reasonable adjustments were not included in a more thoughtful way.

Further, to make matters worse, the County will no doubt seek to close a \$150 million+ budget deficit, once again, on the backs of employers. As the Chamber has stated, we wish to be responsible partners on moving the County forward for the health and certainty that fiscal soundness provides, but we cannot support efforts that seek to create and add new costs on employers such as the proposed paid sick leave mandate.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Reeve, Esq.  
Vice-President, Government Relations  
Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce