



October 4, 2016

Finance Committee  
Cook County Board of Commissioners  
Re: Earned Sick Time Ordinance

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to urge you to support the Earned Sick Time Ordinance.

Rape Victim Advocates is devoted comprehensively and exclusively to the issue of sexual violence. We work toward two primary goals: To assure that survivors of sexual assault are treated with dignity and compassion; and to affect changes in the way the legal system, medical institutions and society as a whole respond to survivors. RVA provides services at no cost to survivors of sexual assault, including legal advocacy; 24-hour medical advocacy at 14 area hospitals (including Stroger and Provident Hospitals); support groups; and individual, couples, and family counseling. In addition, RVA works to prevent sexual assault and advocate for institutional change through public education, sexual assault prevention presentations at schools and colleges, and professional training.

Under this ordinance, employees will not only be able to use earned sick time for their own or family member's illness or preventive care but also to address domestic or sexual violence, or due to a public health emergency, their place of business is closed or need to care for a child whose school has been closed. We regularly work with survivors of sexual violence who have been deeply traumatized and are not in a position to take time off of work because they currently do not have paid sick time. Any employee who has gone through the harrowing trauma of sexual assault should not have to decide between putting food on the table or attending to their healing and their search for justice. Earned sick time will allow employees who have been sexually assaulted to take time off due to the violence and feel more secure that that will not result in a loss of income.

We urge you to support this common sense ordinance that brings Cook County in line with Chicago's recently passed earned sick time, does right by employees, and enhances our collective public health and community assets.

Sincerely,

Sharmili Majmudar  
Executive Director