



New Jersey Time to Care Coalition
Email: info@njtimecare.org
Website: www.njtimetocare.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, May 20, 2016
Contact: Veronica Lavarro, 201-988-5260, veronica@njcitizenaction.org

New Jersey Time to Care Coalition Celebrates Paid Sick Days Successes in Twelve Municipalities

*Elected officials, advocates, and workers call for federal law as part of
National Week of Action led by Family Values @ Work Network*

Newark, New Jersey – New Jersey Time to Care Coalition held a press conference in Newark, NJ, today to celebrate the benefits of paid sick days for the nearly 200,000 New Jerseyans who have gained access to paid sick days through the enactment of 12 local ordinances. Joined by members of Congress, local elected officials, small business owners and workers, the Coalition also called for action to create a national paid sick days policy. Far too many workers still cannot count on a day's wages or even keeping their job when they must take off due to illness.

"We're proud that our wins allowed nearly 200,000 workers and their families to care for themselves or a loved one in need," said **Phyllis Salowe-Kaye, Executive Director of New Jersey Citizen Action and co-convenor of the NJ Time to Care Coalition**. "Our efforts have benefited workers, families and businesses in 12 New Jersey cities, but each of us has loved ones who live in an area that has not yet adopted a paid sick days law. Our wins and the others across the nation are paving the way for the Healthy Families Act."

"I don't earn much money so I can't afford to miss a day's pay, even if I am sick," said Steven Leone, a PrimeFlight Newark Airport worker who cleans United Airlines planes. "I am grateful that the city of Newark has a law that allows me to earn paid time off. But there are still many workers across the country who don't have this option. That's why I am calling on federal officials to take action soon because no worker should have to lose a day's pay or put their job at risk if they need to stay home due to an illness."

Their message is part of Family Values @ Work's National Week of Action for Paid Sick Days that carry a common theme: lifting up the growing momentum and the 32 paid sick days wins across the country, 12 of which are in the Garden State, but pointing out that millions across the country still might not be able to earn paid sick days. Together with elected officials, workers and small business owners, the advocates joined others around the nation to call for passage of the federal law, the **Healthy Families Act**.

"Not only is it a proud accomplishment that Jersey City is the first in New Jersey, and most of the country, to pass Paid Sick Days – it is simply the right thing to do. Jersey City cannot be the economic engine of New Jersey and not give our workers the ability to care for themselves or their loved ones when they are sick, without losing their weekly pay or more," said **Jersey City Council President Rolando Lavarro**. "Jersey City will continue to lead the way in advocating for working families and we look forward to the passage of Healthy Families Act."

U.S. Senator Cory Booker added, "It's unacceptable that the United States is the only developed nation without paid sick leave. Far too many families in New Jersey and across our nation are forced to choose between their economic security and caring for themselves or those they love. Paid sick leave provides stability for families and strengthens our workforce, which is why I will continue to stand with American workers in advancing this important policy."



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“I am very proud of the fact that the 10th Congressional District of New Jersey is leading the way in providing paid sick leave to workers and working families,” said **Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr.** (NJ-10). “Hardworking Americans should be able to take care of themselves and their families when they are sick without having to worry about losing pay, or worse, their jobs. Now is the time to make paid sick leave a national priority. I am a proud original co-sponsor of the Healthy Families Act, and I will continue to call on Congress to pass this bill so working families have the real flexibility and wages they need to be productive at work and take care of their families at home.”

“Passing an earned sick leave ordinance in Plainfield was a tough battle, but we fought hard because we believe that the people of our city should never have to face the difficult decision to either care for themselves and their families or make ends meet,” said **Mayor Adrian Mapp of Plainfield**, one of the first dozen municipalities that enacted and advanced paid sick days in New Jersey. “Paid-sick leave is not a benefit, but a basic human right.”

With the passage of the Healthy Families Act, benefits that over 10 million workers now have nationwide would be available to tens of millions more. Recent polls show that 85% of Americans support requiring employers to offer paid sick days.¹

“Each win we’ve had on the municipal level has laid the foundation for New Jersey to reach the goal of having a comprehensive earned sick days bill that guarantees that the hard working men and women of this state can afford to care for themselves and their families in times of illness,” said **Analilia Mejia, Executive Director of New Jersey Working Families.**

Dr. Jessica Edwards, Regional Vice President - New Jersey of the Committee of Interns and Residents/SEIU Healthcare says paid sick days policies are not just good for workers and families; they're good for public health too. “When working families have access to paid sick days, it helps the whole community. Parents don’t have to send their kids to school because they can’t afford to take a day off. Adults don’t need to feel guilty because they can’t help when their elderly parents have a medical emergency. And fewer of us need to worry about being the next victim of the virus or the bacteria that lives on the glass your waiter sets, or the coffee cup passed to you at the deli, or the bus seat next to you, all because someone felt they had to come to work sick or risk losing their job.”

Economists who study the effect of paid sick days on businesses give paid sick days policies high marks too, saying job retention policies like paid sick days help reduce unemployment, improve employee retention, and strengthen the economy.

Statewide, businesses employing New Jersey workers would save up to \$104.3 million each year by offering paid sick days. Savings would occur as a result of increased productivity and reduced turnover as calculated in an April, 2016 report by NJ Policy Perspective.²

Local business owner said **Peter Learmont of Porta-Print Publishing** in Newark, the second city to adopt a paid sick law in New Jersey, agrees. “Our business and the businesses around us have not collapsed because

1 Retrieved 5/17/2016 from www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/03/business/income-inequality-workers-rights-international-trade-poll.html?_r=0

2 New Jersey Policy Perspective. April 16, 2016. Earned Sick Leave for All Would Help New Jersey’s Workers & Boost its Economy. Brandon McKoy. Retrieved May 17, 2016 from www.njpp.org/assets/reports/NJPPEarnedSickApril2016.pdf



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of paid sick days. It's good for my workers, and our experience shows this makes good business sense as well. More cities and our whole nation should embrace this."

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Additional Quotes from Leaders, Workers, Business Owners and Advocates

"No one should have to make the choice between cancer treatments or a paycheck that keeps the lights on. Paid sick leave isn't just the right thing for millions of families in New Jersey and around the country, it's also sound, responsible policy -- proven by major cities like San Francisco, where employment has grown twice as fast as neighboring counties without the same protections", **said Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman**. "I'm proud that New Jersey municipalities like Trenton have become national leaders on this issue, and I hope my colleagues in Congress catch on quickly so that we can give every American the peace of mind that paid sick leave provides."

"American workers deserve the financial security that comes with paid sick leave. Workers should not have to choose between losing their jobs or staying home to care for themselves or for a sick child," **said Congressman Frank Pallone**. "Paid sick leave should not be a privilege or benefit, but a guaranteed right for all workers. It's good for families, good for public health and good for our economy."

"Jersey City was the first city in New Jersey to pass earned sick leave, and we did it because we felt that no parent should have to choose between caring for a sick loved one and losing 20% or more of their weekly pay. Nearly three years later – and despite all the evidence showing that earned sick leave actually helps strengthen local economies – it's unconscionable that there are still so many places in New Jersey where working families continue to be left on their own," **said Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop**.

"No one should have to face the impossible choice between their health and their paycheck. I am proud that East Orange was among the first in the state and the nation to pass a paid sick leave ordinance in support of working families," **said Mayor Lester E. Taylor III**. "It is my hope that other cities and the State of New Jersey will look to us as an example and pass similar laws to keep their families, communities, and local economies healthy."

Paid sick days help hard-working people keep their jobs, strengthen families, reduce inequality, improve public health and increase worker productivity" **said Marcia Marley, President of Blue Wave NJ**.

"Having paid sick days is not just good for employees, it's good for business," **said Tony Sandkamp, owner of Sandkamp Woodworks** in Jersey City. "My workers deal with equipment that could hurt them or damage our product and it's not worth it having them come in sick just to earn a paycheck. For that reason these days are very valuable, and my workers do their best to save their sick days for when they really need it."