

Statewide paid sick-leave advocates launch new campaign

By Andrew George June 16, 2014 at 1:42 PM

Joined by state Sen. Loretta Weinberg (D-Teaneck) and Assemblywoman Pam Lampitt (D-Voorhees), Working Families United for New Jersey launched a new campaign Monday in Trenton intended to help pass a statewide paid sick-leave bill this year.

Weinberg and Lampitt are the primary sponsors of the measure and introduced identical bills in their respective houses earlier this year.

WFUN Executive Director Edward Correa said Monday that the hope is to have the bill passed during the upcoming lame-duck legislative session. Weinberg noted that she and Lampitt “will be there at the forefront” to champion the measure through the Legislature, but what happens after that is still anyone’s guess.

“The governor’s desk presents another hurdle,” Weinberg said.

Under the legislation, full- and part-time workers would be able to accrue up to one hour of paid sick-leave for every 30 hours worked. A 40-hour per year cap would exist for businesses with 10 or more workers. Employees can start earning sick days after 90 days on the job, unless an employer chooses to begin offering it earlier.

Jersey City and Newark have each passed their own paid sick-leave ordinances within the past year, joining other cities that have done so across the country such as New York, Seattle, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. Still, however, Connecticut remains the only state to have a statewide policy.

Lampitt said that before another municipality chooses to enact its own version of a paid sick-leave ordinance, the state should focus on “unifying” and streamlining the legislation.

“We should do a unified effort,” Lampitt said.

Business groups have previously fought against the ordinances in Jersey City and Newark and have pledged to continue their opposition to the proposed statewide

measure. They claim that not only could the bill prove costly to employers, it presents yet another layer of unnecessary regulation.

Correa added in a statement that “assuming that a policy which benefits workers must also be bad for businesses is incorrect.”

“Providing workers with an earned sick days benefit would be a win-win for businesses because the cost to implement this policy would easily be offset by improved workforce productivity,” Correa said.

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