

4/8/2016

Dear Los Angeles City Council Members,

Los Angeles has the opportunity to build on the state's paid sick time law and pass even stronger protections for all workers and families under a local ordinance. We urge you to set a new standard by passing a strong earned sick and safe time law, and we particularly urge you to ensure that the definition of family in the bill reflects the reality that today's families come in all shapes and sizes.

Since 1973, the National LGBTQ Task Force has worked to build power, take action, and create change to achieve freedom and justice for (LGBTQ) people and their families. As a progressive social justice organization, the Task Force works toward a society that values and respects the diversity of human expression and identity and achieves equity for all. Recognizing all families in the bill will be a step toward that goal.

In Los Angeles County, it is estimated that there are nearly 413,540 LGBTQ adults, and far too many of these individuals are forced to make impossible choices between recovering from illness or taking home a paycheck. LGBTQ workers and families are particularly impacted by not having access to enough earned safe and sick time. LGBTQ couples raising children are more likely to be lower income than heterosexual couples raising children in California and, therefore, are less likely to be able to afford unpaid time off from work without jeopardizing their economic security. Earned safe and sick days are especially important for LGBTQ families of color in Los Angeles since Black and Latino/a LGBTQ couples are more likely to be raising children and struggling financially than white LGBTQ couples. American Indian and Latino/a transgender people are more likely to be parenting than white transgender people as well.

Many LGBTQ workers and families are unable to take paid sick time in order to care for members of their chosen family—loved ones with whom they have close, family-like relationships, even if they are not biologically or legally related. Los Angeles has a reputation as an LGBTQ-friendly city due to its culturally competent social services, healthcare, and legal assistance. As a result, many LGBTQ individuals come to Los Angeles for a higher quality of life and therefore are geographically separated from their biological families. Additionally, LGBTQ adults between the ages of 45-64 are four times more likely to rely on a friend as a caregiver than non-LGBTQ older adults, and two-thirds of them consider their friends as “chosen family.” During health emergencies, many in the LGBTQ

community turn to a close circle of loved ones for care, and it is critical to cover these relationships in a Los Angeles earned sick and safe time law.

Finally, earned sick and safe days provide significant benefits to people living with HIV/AIDS and their loved ones. If workers living with HIV/AIDS are unable to take time off to attend medical appointments and recover from illness, their health, economic security, and housing stability may be jeopardized. Earned sick and safe days also support people living with HIV/AIDS by ensuring their loved ones can take time off from work to provide care when necessary.

Earned sick and safe time laws have passed around the country, and research shows they are working well. In addition to improving the health of the community, earned sick and safe time will strengthen businesses by lowering turnover, decreasing the spread of illness in the workplace, and improving worker morale, productivity, and health.

For the reasons outlined in this letter, the National LGBTQ Task Force strongly supports the passage of an earned sick and safe time law in Los Angeles and urges the City Council to pass a model policy that broadly defines family. If you have any questions about the content of this letter, please contact Meghan Maury, Senior Policy Counsel, at (202) 639-6322 or by email at [mmaury@thetaskforce.org](mailto:mmaury@thetaskforce.org).

Sincerely,

National LGBTQ Task Force

