



March 29, 2016

Los Angeles Economic Development Committee
c/o Office of the City Clerk
200 N. Spring St., Room 470
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attn: Adam Lid, Legislative Assistant

Re: Council File 14-1371- Follow-up Policy Elements for a Citywide Minimum Wage

Honorable Councilmembers,

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) strongly supports a Los Angeles citywide paid sick days law. CLASP is a national organization (with staff in the Los Angeles area) dedicated to promoting policy solutions that work for low-income people.

We urge the Economic Development Committee to advance a sick days law that provides robust protections to Angeleno workers. There is a wealth of evidence supporting the benefits of paid sick days for workers' health, economic security, and productivity, and affirming the positive outcomes of such laws for employers and the local economy. LA workers should enjoy sick time protections that are on par with their counterparts in San Francisco, Oakland, Emeryville, and Santa Monica.

Prior to the 2014 passage of California's Healthy Workplace, Healthy Families Act (AB 1522), nearly half of LA's private sector workers – more than 650,000 – lacked access to even a single day of paid sick time. Under the new law, most of these workers now have access to up to three days of sick time – an important step forward, but an insufficient one. According to the Centers for Disease Control, a person with an uncomplicated case of the flu may need between three and seven days to recover, and may be contagious for five to seven days after becoming ill. A local law that guarantees workers more sick days than the state law currently prescribes would help to keep LA families, workplaces, and communities healthy and productive.

It is crucial that the city adopt a law that not only allows workers to use their sick time to care for family members (as is provided for under the state law), but that adopts a broader and more appropriate definition of "family member." Legal experts advise that a definition of family members that includes those related by either "blood or affinity" better encompasses the

needs of LA workers' needs, from those caring for older neighbors to LGBTQ community members who are more likely to rely on friends for care. Such a definition of family member has been adopted by the federal government in its recent executive order requiring federal contractors to provide their employees with paid sick days.

In addition to the benefits of paid sick days for workers and families, businesses and the economy are better off with these laws. In 2014, Jim Lazarus, the Senior VP of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce described the effects of the city's paid sick days law on employers as "minimal." He explained, "By and large, this has not been an employer issue. San Francisco's economy is booming." The data support Lazarus' comments. Surveys of San Francisco and Connecticut employers found that they did not experience negative effects as a result of their respective paid sick days laws. In the District of Columbia, an audit found no evidence that sick days caused businesses to leave the city. And economic data from Seattle, Connecticut, San Francisco, and New York City, where workers earn 5 to 9 paid sick days per year, show that their economies have thrived since sick days laws.

The City Council has an opportunity to lift up thousands of LA workers, ensuring that they no longer have to choose between their health or their families' health and their paychecks. Please act quickly to pass a strong paid sick days law that guarantees workers a sufficient number of sick days and the ability to care for family members who are related by blood or affinity.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Ben-Ishai, Ph.D.
Senior Policy Analyst