New York, New York

By the Numbers

An estimated 1.65 to 1.85 million New York City workers do not have access to paid sick days.¹

About the Campaign

The campaign to advance a paid sick days standard for all New York City workers is led by A Better Balance: The Work and Family Legal Center, the New York State Paid Family Leave Coalition, the Working Families Party and the Community Service Society. The coalition also includes Make the Road New York and the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York, as well as involvement by workers’, children’s and women’s advocates and public health leaders.

The campaign is advocating before the City Council for passage of the Paid Sick Time Act, Introduction 97. In the fall of 2010, the Paid Sick Time Act moved closer to passage than ever before. Despite support from a supermajority of the City Council, Council Speaker Christine Quinn declined to support the bill and it did not come to a vote. The coalition is continuing to press for passage in 2011.

The Paid Sick Time Act would allow all workers to earn one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours annually for workers in businesses with fewer than 20 employees and up to 72 hours annually for all other workers. Workers could use the job-protected leave to care for their own illness or the illness of a family member, to seek preventive medical care for themselves or a family member, or in the event that a public health emergency leads to the closure of their workplace or a child’s school or daycare. “Family member” is defined broadly to include a child, spouse, domestic partner, parent, grandchild, grandparent, parent-in-law or parent of a domestic partner.

Partner Profile

A Better Balance is a legal team fighting to give American workers the time and flexibility they need to care for their families. Their mission is to promote equality and expand choices for men and women at all income levels so they may care for their families without sacrificing their economic security. The New York State Paid Family Leave Coalition, which has been active on paid sick days and paid leave since 2000, is comprised of over 100 organizations representing labor groups and advocates for
children, seniors, the disabled and chronically ill. The Working Families Party works to promote the priorities of New York’s working families, including paid sick days and paid leave. The Community Service Society has been the leading voice on behalf of low-income New Yorkers for 165 years. They respond to urgent, contemporary challenges with applied research, advocacy, litigation and innovative program models that help the working poor achieve a better quality of life and promote a more prosperous city.


Stories from New York City Workers

“I grew up believing that if you go to work, work hard and do your best, things will work out for you. When I turned 18 I was dropped from my parents’ insurance and have been uninsured for the past eleven years. I’m a sixth-generation U.S. citizen who has worked full-time since I was 18 years old, yet I cannot afford health care and make a little ‘too much’ to qualify for any government assistance. Because of this, I have to work even if I am sick. If I had paid sick days, one day’s pay would help me pay the uninsured doctor visit, which costs about $150 plus prescriptions. Since I currently have no paid sick days, when I get sick I have to choose between paying my bills and recovering. Most often I choose paying my bills over my health.”
— Jennifer, New York, N.Y.

“Last week, I caught a bad stomach virus. I had to work for the last five days with a fever, stomach cramps, aches, nausea and a severe headache — all because I do not have paid sick days. It is extremely demoralizing that despite being a fantastic employee and doing an exemplary job, I have to force myself to work while sick and in pain, risking a prolonged illness. Calling in sick might mean losing my apartment.”
— Jade, New York, N.Y.


About PaidSickDays.org & the Paid Sick Days Campaign

The Paid Sick Days Campaign is a project of the National Partnership for Women & Families, a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care and policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at www.paidsickdays.org or www.nationalpartnership.org.

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