



February 25, 2010
Labor and Public Employees Committee
Public Hearing on SB-63

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Testimony IN SUPPORT of SB-63 for Paid Sick Days

Members of the Committee:

I wish to express our support for the paid sick days bill. Now more than ever, workers need this crucial safety net to protect themselves and their families when someone becomes ill. Workers and their families need protection in this economy, and they are looking to their elected officials to help.

Local 371 members know how essential paid sick days can be for themselves and their families. These days, family budgets are stretched so thin that just having to take one day—or even half a day—away from work without pay to recover from the flu or to care for a sick child, can lead to financial disaster. What's worse, workers without paid sick days risk losing their jobs whenever they take needed time off. No one can risk losing their job in this economy. A minimum standard of paid sick days would prevent working families from struggling further.

- Nearly half (44 percent) of full-time, private sector workers have no paid sick days. The situation is even worse for low-wage workers: over three in four (79 percent) have no access to paid sick days. (Vicky Lovell. 2004. "No Time to Be Sick." Institute for Women's Policy Research.)
- One in six workers say they or a family member have been fired, suspended, written up or otherwise penalized by an employer – or threatened with such a penalty – for taking time off to cope with an illness. (NORC/Public Welfare Foundation research, June-July 2008. <http://www.publicwelfare.org/AboutUs/documents/PollReportFINALa.pdf>)

We represent workers with a range of paid sick time policies (or lack of paid sick time) in their contracts. The provision of a few paid sick days a year has no bearing on the success and growth of the companies we deal with. The only significant impact is on the workers, who benefit from improved health, increased morale, greater productivity, and more economic security.

We urge the passage of SB-63 this year.