

GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF LABOR STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT
DONNA LEVITT, MANAGER



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February 28, 2011

Labor and Public Employees Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Room 3800, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our experience implementing the San Francisco Paid Sick Leave Ordinance (PSLO).

The Paid Sick Leave Ordinance was adopted by San Francisco voters on November 7, 2006, with 61% of voters voting in favor of the measure. The PSLO found that a large number of workers in San Francisco, particularly part-time employees and low income workers, did not have paid sick leave – or had an inadequate level of paid sick leave – available to them. The absence or inadequacy of paid sick leave among workers in San Francisco posed serious problems not only for affected workers but also their families, their employers, the health care system, and the community as a whole.

San Francisco was the first jurisdiction in the United States with a paid sick leave requirement. The ordinance took effect on February 5, 2007. *It requires all employers to provide paid sick leave to employees who perform work in San Francisco.*

While paid sick leave may have been a new concept to some employers and employees in San Francisco, we believe that the implementation of the law has been smooth. When the PSLO took effect in February of 2007, some employers initially reported that they needed additional time to adjust their payroll systems to ensure compliance with the new requirements. Since that time, we have heard relatively few complaints or problems from employers with respect to implementation of the law. Recent surveys conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research found that 2/3 of employers in San Francisco support the law.

I am not aware of any employer in San Francisco who has reduced staff or made any other significant changes in their business as a result of the sick leave ordinance. While San Francisco, like every community, has suffered in the recent recession, to my knowledge no employer has cited the sick leave requirement as a reason for closing or reducing their business operations in the city.

Our office completed an extensive public rulemaking process shortly after adoption of the law to provide guidelines on the PSLO requirements. OLSE also produced multilingual resources to explain the law to employers and employees. These materials are available for your review at www.sfgov.org/olse. In addition, the San Francisco Department of Public Health has written a letter to every restaurant owner in the city reminding them of requirements of the PSLO and the importance of providing sick leave to prevent communicable disease. With an eye to the looming H1N1 crisis, last

spring OLSE and the San Francisco Department of Public Health also conducted a special outreach to parents and guardians through the San Francisco Unified School District. Because of the PSLO, San Francisco is uniquely positioned to deal with a public health emergency such as H1N1.

Even with the challenges of being the country's first municipality to implement a local sick days ordinance, I again state that our implementation has been very smooth. When we receive complaints from workers that have been denied paid sick leave, the complaints are usually resolved easily. Should Connecticut choose to implement a paid sick leave law, we would gladly make ourselves available to provide assistance based on our experience here in San Francisco.

Please let me know should you have any further questions, and thank you again for the opportunity to share our experience implementing the San Francisco Paid Sick Leave Ordinance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Levitt".

Donna Levitt
Labor Standards Enforcement Officer