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## **Ground-Breaking Bill Would Provide All California Workers with Paid Sick Days**

### ***Recent Poll Shows Overwhelming Support for Paid Time Off Law to Recover from Illness or Care for Sick Family Members***

Today, Assemblywoman Fiona Ma announced a bill that would allow all California workers to earn paid sick days that they can use to take care of themselves or sick family members. The bill, AB 2716, is co-sponsored by the California Labor Federation and ACORN, and is supported by a statewide coalition of advocacy organizations, health professionals and public health officials. If enacted, the law would make California the first state in the nation to ensure paid sick days to all workers.

“Everybody loses when people are forced to show up to work sick,” said Assemblywoman Ma. “A healthy workforce is a win-win for business, families, and most of all, workers.”

Nearly six million working Californians currently receive zero paid sick days through their employers. AB 2716 will allow workers to earn paid sick days, which they can use for personal illness, family medical issues and to recover from domestic violence or assault.

“Many California workers are forced to make an impossible choice when they or their children become ill,” said Art Pulaski, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation. “No worker should have to choose between losing a day’s wages or maybe even their job to stay home to take care of themselves or their children.”

A recent poll conducted by UCLA professor Ruth Milkman shows overwhelming support by Californians from all walks of life for paid sick days legislation. A large majority – 88 percent – of California adults surveyed indicated that they “agreed” or “agreed strongly” that there should be a law guaranteeing paid sick days for all California workers.

“I am a single mother with three children, and I have to work two jobs to support myself and my family,” said Kathleen Martinez, an Antioch resident who works part-time at a restaurant and grocery food store. “I have no paid sick days, so I’ve spent many sleepless nights worrying about taking days off from work when I get sick or when my kids get sick. I also worry about infecting my customers when I am forced to come to work sick. But right now, I have no choice.”

“The lack of paid sick days poses a serious hazard to the public’s health – workers who feel pressure to show up to work sick handle our food at restaurants and take care of our children at daycare centers,” said Dr. Mitch Katz, director of health at the San Francisco Department of Public Health. “We can avoid any number of public health crises by allowing people the opportunity to take time off when needed without penalty.”

In 2006, San Francisco voters passed Proposition F that provided all workers in the city with the ability to earn and use paid sick days. Shortly after the one year anniversary of the law, AB 2716 was introduced to allow a worker to use paid sick time for up to 40 hours or 5 days in each calendar year for workers of small businesses, and 72 hours or 9 days per calendar year for all other workers. Studies have found that having paid sick days actually saves money for businesses by reducing turnover and reducing the spread of illness in the workplace, and improving workers’ morale and productivity.

California’s paid sick days legislation is at the forefront of a national trend, as Maine, Massachusetts, Ohio and Washington, DC, are considering similar legislation.

*California Labor Federation • Office of Assemblywoman Fiona Ma • California ACORN • Labor Project for Working Families • Young Workers United • 9to5, National Association of Working Women- Los Angeles and Bay Area Chapters • California Nurses Association • Legal Aid Society- Employment Law Center • California Commission on the Status of Women • Parent Voices- California Child Care Resource & Referral Network • Family Caregiver Alliance/National Center on Caregiving*

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