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STATE SENATE COMMITTEE PASSES PAID SICK DAYS
*AB 2716 two votes away from becoming the first law
to guarantee paid sick days in the nation*

SACRAMENTO—Two days after Senator Barack Obama unveiled a national push for paid sick days, California State Senate Democrats today passed Assembly Bill 2716, the Healthy Families, Healthy Workplaces Act, out of the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee, putting California on track to becoming the first state in the nation where all workers can earn paid sick days.

Authored by Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, a San Francisco Democrat, AB 2716 allows workers to earn one day for every 30 hours worked that can be used to recover from illness, care for a sick family member, or recover from domestic violence or sexual assault. The bill moves next to the Senate Appropriations Committee and is expected to be heard by the committee in July. If signed into law, AB 2716 would make California the first state in the nation to ensure paid sick days for all workers.

“In these tough economic times, Californians should not worry about being fired or demoted simply for being sick,” said Assemblywoman Ma. “Protecting the public health means increased productivity for employees, lower turnover for employers and fewer instances where a sick employee infects a customer.”

Co-sponsored by the California Labor Federation and California ACORN, AB 2716 is supported by a statewide coalition of over 50 organizations including local governments, health professionals and civil rights organizations. Nearly 6 million working Californians, or over 40 percent of the workforce, currently receive zero paid sick days through their employers.

As Chairwoman of the Senate Labor Committee, Senator Carole Migden, also of San Francisco, helped ensure the successful passage of the bill. “The passage of this bill is a victory for not only workers, but for public health,” Migden said. “Nobody wins when a restaurant server, child care provider, or hospital worker is forced to decide whether to show up to work sick or forgoing a day’s pay.”

A recently released study conducted by Dr. Vicky Lovell of the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) concluded that AB 2716 will save California nearly \$1 billion annually. These cost savings are primarily due to reduced turnover and the spread of illness in the workplace.

In 2006, San Francisco voters passed Proposition F, an initiative measure supported by both Assemblywoman Ma and Senator Migden, which 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, modeled after the San Francisco ordinance, 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.

A recent poll conducted by the University of California at Los Angeles 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.

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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