



New Jersey Time to Care Coalition

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## **U.S. Labor Secretary, N.J. Mayors, Council Members, Advocates & Experts Gather to Discuss Implementation of Earned Sick Days**

***With six more local earned sick days laws set to go in effect in NJ municipalities, U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez meets with local elected leaders to discuss best practices around implementation and outreach***

Newark -- As six more New Jersey municipalities prepare to implement local earned sick time laws, U.S. Secretary of Labor

Thomas Perez joined mayors, council members, advocates, workers, business owners and experts for a roundtable discussion on best practices for outreach and implementation. The laws will allow workers in those cities to earn between three and five days of paid sick time that can be used to care for themselves or their families in the event of an illness.

New Jersey has seen a flurry of local earned sick time laws thanks to a coordinated campaign of workers, advocates and supportive small business owners. Jersey City enacted the state's first earned sick time law in October 2013, and seven more municipalities enacted local ordinances or ballot questions in 2013. New Jersey cities with earned sick days laws on the books include East Orange, Irvington, Montclair, Newark, Paterson, Passaic, and Trenton.

"Our coalition is committed to working with local officials to share best practices from around the country on how to implement these laws in a way that is fair to workers and businesses," said Analilia Mejia, executive director of New Jersey Working Families. "Today is a big first step on the road to ensuring that workers in these cities can fully take advantage of the rights they have won for themselves."

According to estimates from the Rutgers Center for Women and Work, local earned sick time laws will cover nearly 140,000 workers who previously had no paid sick time. Eight of the sixteen U.S. cities with local earned sick time laws on the books can be found in New Jersey.

*"Providing families with time to care means strong families, strong workplaces, and strong communities."*



“New Jersey voters and local leaders have placed our state at the forefront of a nationwide fight for workers rights, but putting these laws on the books is only half the battle,” said Dena Mottola Jaborska, Director of Organizing and Strategic Program Development. “Now we have to work with municipalities to make sure that these laws are fully and fairly enforced.

All local sick time ordinances passed this year allow private-sector workers to earn 1 hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked. Those that work in businesses with 10 or more employees can earn 5 paid sick days per year; workers in businesses with nine or fewer employees would be eligible to earn 3 paid sick days per year. In addition, employees directly in contact with the public, such as food service and daycare workers would be eligible to earn 5 sick days regardless of company size. The days can be used to care for themselves or for sick children, siblings, parents, spouse, civil union or domestic partner, grandparents or grandchildren.

“The most critical components of earned sick time enforcement are education and outreach,” said Karen White, Director of the Working Families Program at the Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University. “The most successful earned sick days enforcement programs proactively reach out to municipalities so that both workers and businesses know their rights and responsibilities, while creating clear pathways forward for workers who are being denied their rights under these new laws.”

Local earned sick days laws have spread rapidly through New Jersey as part of a carefully coordinated campaign to build support for a statewide initiative that would cover all of the 1.2 million New Jersey workers who lack paid sick days. Earned sick days laws went into effect in Jersey City in January and in Newark in July 2014. Other municipal laws will go into effect early in 2015.

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