January 31, 2014

Dear Member of Congress:

**We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to support the Healthy Families Act (H.R.1286/S.631)** a common sense bill that would allow workers to earn up to seven paid sick days a year to recover from short-term illnesses like the flu, access preventive care, care for a sick family member or seek assistance related to domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. Without paid sick days, workers are forced to make impossible choices when illness strikes: stay home, lose pay and risk their jobs; or go to work sick, risk their health and spread disease to their co-workers and communities. Establishing a national paid sick days standard will help make businesses and governments more efficient while giving working families more financial stability — leading to a stronger economy for all.

**No one should face the impossible choice between caring for their health and keeping their paycheck or job.** But more than 43 million workers — nearly four in 10 private sector workers — must make this decision every time illness strikes because they don’t have access to earned paid sick days. And millions more lack paid sick time to care for a sick child or other family member. Working families need the job and economic security paid sick days provide.

**The lack of paid sick days is acute in jobs requiring frequent contact with the public — with potentially grave public health consequences.** Three in four food preparation and service workers don’t have a single paid sick day. Without paid sick days, workers are forced to take unpaid leave or work sick. In the restaurant industry, the result is that nearly two-thirds of servers and cooks report that they have served or cooked while ill. This puts workers, customers and businesses in danger. Similarly, the vast majority of workers in child care centers and nursing homes cannot earn paid sick days. When these workers have no choice but to work sick, they risk spreading contagious diseases to the very young and the very old.

**Ensuring all workers can earn paid sick days will significantly reduce public expenditures.** Workers without paid sick days are more likely to seek treatment at an emergency department because they can’t take time off to get care during regular business hours. A 2011 study found that if all workers had paid sick days, 1.3 million emergency room visits could be prevented each year, saving $1.1 billion annually. More than half of these savings — $517 million — would accrue to taxpayer-funded health insurance programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program.

**Businesses benefit when their employees have access to paid sick days.** When sick workers are able to stay home, the spread of disease slows and workplaces are both healthier and more productive. Plus, workers recover faster from illness and obtain timely medical care — enabling them to get back to work more quickly and holding down health care costs. Paid sick days also reduce “presenteeism”, the productivity lost when employees work sick, which is estimated to cost our national economy $160 billion annually and surpasses the cost of absenteeism. In addition, workers who earn paid sick days are 28 percent less likely
than workers who don’t earn paid sick days to be injured on the job — with an even greater difference among workers in high-risk occupations.\textsuperscript{8}

\textbf{Paid sick days enable working parents to care for their children when they are sick — shortening child recovery time and reducing community contagion.} Unfortunately, more than half of working parents are unable to earn even a few paid sick days to use to care for a sick child.\textsuperscript{9} Parents without paid sick days are more than twice as likely as parents with paid sick days to send a sick child to school or day care.\textsuperscript{10} When parents have no choice but to do so, children’s health and educational attainment is put at risk — as is the health of classmates, teachers and child care providers.

\textbf{Paid sick days policies have been enacted successfully at the state and local levels.} Connecticut, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Seattle have all successfully implemented paid sick days laws, and in 2013, Portland, Oregon and New York City have become the latest cities to pass paid sick days. San Francisco’s paid sick days law has been in place since 2007. Since its passage, the number of businesses and jobs in the city has increased relative to the surrounding five counties without paid sick days laws.\textsuperscript{11} And workers and their families have benefitted with little to no burden on employers.\textsuperscript{12} The momentum for paid sick days policies is growing in states and cities across the country, but illness knows no geographic boundaries and access to paid sick days should not be dependent on where a worker is employed. That is why the national paid sick days standard proposed in the Healthy Families Act is so important.

\textbf{The Healthy Families Act would:}

- Allow workers in businesses with 15 or more employees to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days each year to be used to recover from their own illness, access preventive care or provide care for a sick family member;
- Allow workers who are survivors of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault to use their paid sick days for recovery or to seek assistance; and
- Allow employers that already provide paid sick days or paid time off to maintain their existing policies, as long as they meet the minimums set forth in the bill for amount of time, types of use and method of use.

Working people should not have to risk their financial health when they do what the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urge, and what we all agree is the right thing to do when illness strikes — stay home to recover. Setting a minimum paid sick days standard will be good for America’s workers, families, communities and businesses. When people have the financial and job security they need, our economy gets stronger.

We urge you to demonstrate your strong commitment to our nation’s working families by becoming a co-sponsor of the Healthy Families Act. Thank you.

Sincerely,

\textit{National Organizations}

\textbf{National Partnership for Women & Families}
A Better Balance: The Work and Family Legal Center
African American Ministers In Action (AAMIA)
African American Ministers Leadership Council (AAMLC)
Alliance for Children & Families
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)
AFL-CIO
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
American Friends Service Committee
American Psychological Association
Business and Professional Women's Foundation
Campaign for Community Change
Caring Across Generations
Center for American Progress Action Fund
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW)
Coalition on Human Needs
Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO
Demos
Direct Care Alliance
ECE PolicyWorks
Equal Rights Advocates
Families USA
Family Equality Council
Family Values @ Work Consortium
Feminist Majority
First Focus Campaign for Children
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Half in Ten
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
Human Impact Partners
Institute for Science and Human Values
Interfaith Worker Justice
Jewish Women International
Jobs with Justice/American Rights at Work
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Labor Project for Working Families
Legal Momentum
Legal Voice
LULAC
Main Street Alliance
Maternity Care Coalition
MomsRising
NAACP
National Action Network
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Mothers' Centers
National Association of Social Workers
National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
National Consumers League
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Council of Women's Organizations
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Employment Law Project (NELP)
National Fatherhood Initiative
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH)
National Military Family Association
National Organization for Women (NOW)
National Perinatal Association
National Research Center for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
OWL - The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
Partnership for Working Families
People For the American Way
PICO National Network
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. (PNBC)
Progressive States Network
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
RESULTS
The Roosevelt Institute
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Trust for America's Health
United Methodist Church
United Neighborhood Centers of America
United Steelworkers (USW)
USAAction
Voices for America's Children
Wider Opportunities for Women
Women Employed
Women's Media Center
Working America
Young Invincibles

State and Local Organizations
Alabama
AAUW of Alabama

Alaska
AAUW of Alaska

Arizona
AAUW of Arizona
Navajo Nation Breastfeeding Coalition
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Phoenix
Sun City/West Valley National Organization for Women

Arkansas
AAUW of Arkansas
Little Rock National Organization for Women

California
9to5 California
AAUW of California
Before and After Baby
Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center
Restaurant Opportunities Center Bay Area
Restaurant Opportunities Center Los Angeles

Colorado
9to5 Colorado
AAUW of Colorado
Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition
Colorado Fiscal Institute
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
FRESC: Good Jobs, Strong Communities
Interfaith Worker Justice Committee of Colorado
NAACP Colorado/Montana/Wyoming State Conference
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Denver

Connecticut
AAUW of Connecticut
Connecticut Working Families Party

Delaware
AAUW of Delaware

District of Columbia
Christ Our Redeemer AME Church
District of Columbia Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.
Pilgrim Baptist Church
Restaurant Opportunities Center Washington, DC
Florida
AAUW of Florida
Broward County Chapter of the National Organization for Women
Farmworker Association of Florida
Florida Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.

Miami-Dade Coalition for Healthy Families and Workplaces
Restaurant Opportunities Center Miami
Tampa Chapter of the National Organization for Women

Georgia
9to5 Atlanta
AAUW of Georgia
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Atlanta

Hawaii
AAUW of Hawaii

Illinois
AAUW of Illinois
Action Now
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Arise Chicago
Chicago Women’s AIDS Project
Federation of College Clerical and Technical Personnel, Local 1708, AFT, IFT, AFL-CIO
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
Human Action Community Organization (HACO)
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
National Council of Jewish Women, Illinois State Public Affairs Committee
ParentsWork
Restaurant Opportunities Center Chicago
SEIU Healthcare Illinois & Indiana

Indiana
AAUW of Indiana
Community, Faith & Labor Coalition
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Indianapolis

Iowa
AAUW of Iowa
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Iowa

Kansas
AAUW of Kansas
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.
Kentucky
AAUW of Kentucky
Lactation Improvement Network of Kentucky

Louisiana
AAUW of Louisiana
Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition
Restaurant Opportunities Center New Orleans

Maine
AAUW of Maine
Maine Women's Lobby

Maryland
AAUW of Maryland
Baltimore National Organization for Women
Job Opportunities Task Force
The Prince of Peace Baptist Church, Baltimore
Public Justice Center
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Baltimore

Massachusetts
AAUW of Massachusetts
Jewish Alliance for Law & Social Action
Massachusetts Paid Leave Coalition
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Boston
St. Paul A.M.E. Church

Michigan
AAUW of Michigan
Metro-Detroit Chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women
Oakland/Macomb Michigan National Organization for Women
Restaurant Opportunities Center Michigan

Minnesota
AAUW of Minnesota
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of the Twin Cities
Uptown National Organization for Women

Mississippi
AAUW of Mississippi

Missouri
AAUW of Missouri
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America's Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Kansas City
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of St. Louis

Montana
AAUW of Montana

Nebraska
AAUW of Nebraska
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Omaha

Nevada
AAUW of Nevada

New Hampshire
NH Sisters of Solidarity

New Jersey
AAUW of New Jersey
Grace Cathedral Family Worship Center, Inc.
New Jersey Citizen Action
New Jersey Tenants Organization
Northern NJ Chapter of the National Organization for Women
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of New Jersey

New Mexico
AAUW of New Mexico
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Albuquerque

New York
AAUW of New York
Academy of Women's Health
Catalyst
Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC)
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
New York Paid Leave Coalition
New York State Nurses Association
Restaurant Opportunities Center New York

North Carolina
AAUW of North Carolina
Fayetteville National Organization for Women
North Carolina Justice Center
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of North Carolina
North Dakota
AAUW of North Dakota

Ohio
AAUW of Ohio
Akron Area National Organization for Women
National Organization for Women, Greater Cleveland Chapter
Ohio National Organization for Women
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Cincinnati
Southeast Seventh-day Adventist Church
Woodland Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Zion Hill Missionary Baptist

Oklahoma
AAUW of Oklahoma

Oregon
AAUW of Oregon
Central Oregon Coast National Organization for Women
Family Forward Oregon

Pennsylvania
Institute for the Advancement of Working Families
Micah Leadership Council
New Hope Baptist Church
PathWays PA
Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses & Allied Professionals (PASNAP)
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pittsburgh UNITED
Restaurant Opportunities Center Philadelphia
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Pittsburgh
Southwestern Pennsylvania Coalition of Labor Union of Women
Women’s Law Project

Rhode Island
AAUW of Rhode Island
Rhode Island Breastfeeding Coalition

South Carolina
AAUW of South Carolina

South Dakota
AAUW of South Dakota

Tennessee
AAUW of Tennessee
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Memphis
Texas
AAUW of Texas
Equal Justice Center
North Dallas National Organization for Women
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Dallas
Workers Defense Project

Utah
AAUW of Utah

Vermont
AAUW of Vermont
Voices for Vermont’s Children

Virginia
AAUW of Virginia
Charlottesville Chapter of the National Organization for Women (CNOW)
NoVA National Organization for Women
Vienna Area National Organization for Women
Virginia Breastfeeding Task Force
Virginia National Organization for Women

Washington
AAUW of Washington
Economic Opportunity Institute
Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Seattle
Statewide Poverty Action Network
Teamsters Local 117
Thurston County Chapter, National Organization for Women
United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 367
Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Washington State National Organization for Women
Washington Work and Family Coalition

West Virginia
AAUW of West Virginia

Wisconsin
9to5 Milwaukee
AAUW of Wisconsin
ROC Supporting the Transformation of America’s Restaurants (ROC STARS) of Milwaukee
SEIU HealthCare Wisconsin
Wisconsin National Organization for Women
Workers’ Rights Center
Wyoming
AAUW of Wyoming


10 See note 5.
