

Legislation Text

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Enacting a new Chapter 9-3300, entitled “Promoting Healthy Families and Workplaces,” to provide that certain employees are entitled to paid sick leave, all under certain terms and conditions.

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. A new Chapter 9-3300 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “Promoting Healthy Families and Workplaces,” is hereby enacted, to read as follows:

CHAPTER 9-3300. PROMOTING HEALTHY FAMILIES AND WORKPLACES.

§9-3301. Findings.

Whereas the Council finds that:

(1) Most workers in the City of Philadelphia will at some time during the year need temporary time off from work to take care of their own health needs or the health needs of members of their families.

(2) There are many workers employed in the City of Philadelphia who do not have any paid sick days, or who have an inadequate number of paid sick days to care for their own health needs or the health needs of members of their families. Approximately 44% of workers in the Philadelphia area do not have paid sick days. Nationally, 49 % of all workers do not have paid sick days and only 30% of workers may use those sick days to care for sick children.

(3) Low-income workers are significantly less likely to have paid sick time than other members of the workforce. Nationally, only one in five low income workers (20%) has access to paid sick time.

(4) Providing workers time off to attend to their own health care and the health care of family members will ensure a healthier and more productive workforce in the City of Philadelphia.

(5) Paid sick days will have a positive effect on the public health of the City of Philadelphia by allowing sick workers the occasional option of staying at home to care for themselves when ill, thus lessening their recovery time and reducing the likelihood of spreading illness to other members of the workforce and to the public.

(6) Paid sick days will allow parents to provide personal care for their sick children. Parental care makes children’s recovery faster, prevents more serious illnesses, and improves children’s overall mental and physical health.

(7) Providing a minimal number of paid sick days is affordable for employers and good for business.

(8) Paid sick days are good for business. Employers who provide paid sick days have greater employee retention and avoid the problem of workers coming to work sick and lowering productivity.

(9) Nationally, almost 60% of those who provide unpaid care to an adult family member or friend must combine their caregiving with employment in order to provide financially for their family member and themselves.

(10) Employees frequently lose their jobs or are disciplined with suspensions or demerits for taking sick days to care for sick family members or even to recover from their own illnesses.

(11) Workers in jobs with high public contact, such as service workers and restaurant workers, are very unlikely to have paid sick days. Because of the lack of paid sick days, these workers have no choice but to come to work when they are ill, thereby increasing the risk of passing illnesses on to co-workers and customers. For example, approximately 78% of food service and accommodation workers in the Philadelphia area do not have paid sick days. Employers can be held liable for the costs of diseases spread by their workers who lack paid sick days.

(12) Many employers would like to provide their workers with paid sick days but fear being at a competitive disadvantage because other employers do not.

§9-3302. Purposes.

The purposes of this Chapter are:

(1) To ensure that all workers employed in the City of Philadelphia can address their own health needs and the health needs of their families by requiring employers to provide a minimum level of paid sick days including time for family care;

(2) To diminish public and private health care costs in the City of Philadelphia by enabling workers to seek early and routine medical care for themselves and their family members;

(3) To protect workers employed in the City of Philadelphia from losing their jobs while they use sick days to care for themselves or their families;

(4) To safeguard the public welfare, health, safety and prosperity of the people of and visitors to the City of Philadelphia; and

(5) To accomplish the purposes described in paragraphs (1) - (4) in a manner that is feasible for employers.

§9-3303. Definitions.

(1) “Agency” means Mayor’s Office of Labor Standards, or such other office as the Mayor or Managing Director shall designate.

(2) “Employee” means any individual employed by an employer within the geographic boundaries of the City of Philadelphia; but excluding independent contractors, seasonal workers, employees hired for a term of less than six months, interns, pool employees, and State and Federal employees.

(3) “Employer” is as defined in 43 P.S. § 333.103(g); except that an employer who employs five (5) or fewer employees for at least forty (40) weeks in a calendar year shall not be subject to the provisions of this Chapter. In determining the number of persons employed during a given week, all persons performing work for compensation on a full-time, part-time, or temporary basis shall be counted. A chain establishment that would not qualify as a small business under subsection (6) shall be subject to the provisions of this Chapter regardless of the number of employees in that establishment.

(4) “Employ” is as defined in 43 P.S. § 333.103(f).

(5) “Philadelphia” means the geographic boundaries of the City of Philadelphia.

(6) “Small Business” means an employer that employs more than 5 but fewer than 11 employees. A chain establishment doing business under the same trade name as used by 15 or more other establishments (whether such other establishments are located in the City or elsewhere and regardless of the type of ownership of each individual establishment), is not a “Small Business” for purposes of this Chapter.

(7) “Family member” means:

(a) A biological, adopted or foster child, stepchild or legal ward or a child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis.

(b) A biological, foster, stepparent or adoptive parent or legal guardian of an employee or an employee’s spouse or a person who stood in loco parentis when the employee was a minor child.

(c) A person to whom the employee is legally married under the laws of Pennsylvania.

(d) A grandparent or spouse of a grandparent;

(e) A grandchild;

(f) A biological, foster, or adopted sibling or spouse of a biological, foster or adopted sibling;

(g) A Life Partner as defined in Section 9-1102 of this Code;

(h) Any other individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.

(8) “Health care professional” means any person licensed under Federal or Pennsylvania law to

provide medical or emergency services, including but not limited to doctors, nurses and emergency room personnel.

(9) “Intern” means a student enrolled in an educational institution, who is provided a supervised work experience by an employer.

(10) “Paid sick time” or “paid sick days” means time that is compensated at the same hourly rate and with the same benefits, including health care benefits, as the employee normally earns during hours worked and is provided by an employer to an employee for the purposes described in Section 9-3305 of this Chapter.

(11) “Pool employee” means an employee who does not work on a regular schedule but calls in for work assignments and has no obligation to work when he or she does not call in, but who is not employed by a temporary placement agency.

(12) “Retaliatory personnel action” means the discharge, suspension, or demotion by an employer of an employee or any other adverse action taken for an unlawful purpose by an employer against an employee.

§9-3304. Accrual of Paid Sick Time.

(1) All employees as defined in this Chapter have the right to paid sick time as provided herein.

(2) All employees shall accrue a minimum of one hour of paid sick time for every 40 hours worked in Philadelphia. Employees will not accrue more than 56 hours of paid sick time in a calendar year, unless the employer selects a higher limit. Employees of small businesses will not accrue more than 32 hours of paid sick time in a calendar year unless the employer selects a higher limit.

(3) Employees who are exempt from overtime requirements under 29 U.S.C. § 213(a)(1) of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act will be assumed to work 40 hours in each work week for purposes of paid sick time accrual unless their normal work week is less than 40 hours, in which case paid sick time accrues based upon that normal work week.

(4) Paid sick time as provided in this Section shall begin to accrue at the commencement of employment.

(5) Employees shall be entitled to use accrued paid sick time beginning on the 90th calendar day following commencement of their employment. After the 90th calendar day of employment, employees may use paid sick time as it is accrued.

(6) Paid sick time shall be carried over to the following calendar year; however, an employee’s use of paid sick time provided under this Chapter in each calendar year shall not exceed 56 hours for employees of employers with eleven or more employees and shall not exceed 32 hours for employees of small businesses.

(7) Any employer with a paid leave policy, who makes available an amount of paid leave (including but not limited to vacation days, sick days, short-time disability benefits, floating holidays, parental leave, personal

days, or PTO), sufficient to meet or exceed the accrual requirements of this Section, and that may be used for the same purposes and under the same conditions as paid sick time under this Chapter, is not required to provide additional paid sick time. Further, any employer whose provision of paid leave is subject to the terms of a bona fide collective bargaining agreement shall be excluded from the requirements of this Chapter.

(8) Nothing in this Section shall be construed as requiring financial or other reimbursement to an employee from an employer upon the employee's termination, resignation, retirement, or other separation from employment for accrued paid sick time that has not been used.

(9) At its discretion, the employer may loan sick time to the employee in advance of accrual by such employee.

§9-3305. Use of Paid Sick Time.

(1) Accrued paid sick time shall be provided to an employee by an employer for:

(a) An employee's mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; an employee's need for medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; an employee's need for preventive medical care;

(b) Care of a family member with a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; care of a family member who needs medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; care of a family member who needs preventive medical care.

(2) Accrued paid sick time shall be provided upon the oral or written request of an employee. When possible, the request shall include the expected duration of the absence.

(3) When the use of paid sick time is foreseeable, the employee shall make a good faith effort to provide notice of the need for such time to the employer in advance of the use of the sick time and shall make a reasonable effort to schedule the use of sick time in a manner that does not unduly disrupt the operations of the employer.

(4) Accrued sick time may be used in the smaller of hourly increments or the smallest increment that the employer's payroll system uses to account for absences or use of other time.

(5) For sick time of more than two (2) consecutive days, an employer may require reasonable documentation that the sick time is covered by subsection (1). Documentation signed by a health care professional indicating that sick time is necessary shall be considered reasonable documentation. An employer may not require that the documentation explain the nature of the illness.

(6) An employer may not require, as a condition of providing paid sick time under this Chapter, that the employee search for or find a replacement worker to cover the hours during which the employee is on paid sick

time.

§9-3306. Exercise of Rights Protected; Retaliation Prohibited.

(1) It shall be unlawful for an employer or any other person to interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of, or the attempt to exercise, any right protected under this Chapter.

(2) An employer shall not take retaliatory personnel action or discriminate against an employee because the employee has exercised rights protected under this Chapter. Such rights include but are not limited to the right to use paid sick time pursuant to this Chapter; the right to file a complaint or inform any person about any employer's alleged violation of this Chapter; the right to cooperate with the Agency in its investigations of alleged violations of this Chapter; and the right to inform any person of his or her potential rights under this Section.

(3) It shall be unlawful for an employer's absence control policy to count paid sick time taken under this Chapter as an absence that may lead to or result in discipline, discharge, demotion, suspension, or any other adverse action; provided, however, that nothing in this subsection shall prevent an employer from taking an action against an employee who uses paid sick time under this Chapter for purposes other than those enumerated in § 9-3305(1).

(4) Protections of this Section shall apply to any person who mistakenly but in good faith alleges violations of this Section.

(5) There shall be a rebuttable presumption of unlawful retaliation under this Section whenever an employer discharges, suspends, demotes, or takes other adverse action against a person within 90 days of when that person:

- (a) files a complaint with the Agency or a court alleging a violation of any provision of this Section;*
- (b) informs any person about an employer's alleged violation of this Section;*
- (c) cooperates with the Agency or other persons in the investigation or prosecution of any alleged violation of this Section;*
- (d) opposes any policy, practice, or act that is unlawful under this Section; or*
- (e) informs any person of his or her rights under this Section.*

§9-3307. Notice and Posting.

(1) Employers shall give notice that employees are entitled to paid sick time, the amount of paid sick time, and the terms of its use guaranteed under this Chapter; that retaliation against employees who request or

use paid sick time is prohibited and that each employee has the right to file a complaint or bring a civil action if sick time as required by this Section is denied by the employer or the employee is retaliated against for requesting or taking paid sick time.

(2) Employers shall comply with this Section by either (a) supplying each of their employees with a notice in English and in any language that is the first language spoken by at least 5% of the employer's workforce that contains the information required in subsection (1); or (b) displaying a poster in a conspicuous and accessible place in each establishment where such employees are employed which contains in English and in any language that is the first language spoken by at least 5% of the employer's workforce, all information required under subsection (1).

(3) The Agency shall create and make available to employers posters that contain the information required under subsection (1) for their use in complying with this subsection.

(4) An employer who willfully violates the notice and posting requirements of this Section shall be subject to a civil fine in an amount not to exceed \$100 for each separate offense.

§9-3308. Employer Records.

Employers shall commence keeping records documenting hours worked by employees and paid sick time taken by employees upon the effective date of this Chapter, shall retain such records for a period of five years, and shall allow the Agency access to such records, with appropriate notice and at a mutually agreeable time, to monitor compliance with the requirements of this Chapter. When an issue arises as to an employee's entitlement to paid sick time under this Section, if the employer does not maintain or retain adequate records documenting hours worked by the employee and paid sick time taken by the employee, or does not allow the Agency reasonable access to such records, it shall be presumed that the employer has violated the Chapter, absent clear and convincing evidence otherwise.

§9-3309. Regulations.

The Agency shall be authorized to coordinate implementation and enforcement of this Section and shall promulgate appropriate guidelines or regulations for such purposes.

§9-3310. Enforcement.

(1) An employee or other person may report to the Agency any suspected violation of this Chapter.

(2) The Agency is authorized to take appropriate steps to enforce this Section.

(3) The Agency, the City Solicitor, any person aggrieved by a violation of this Chapter, or any entity a

member of which is aggrieved by a violation of this Chapter may bring a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction against an employer violating this Chapter. Such action may be brought by a person aggrieved by a violation of this Section without first filing an administrative complaint.

(a) Upon prevailing in an action brought pursuant to this Section, aggrieved persons shall recover the full amount of any unpaid sick time plus any actual damages suffered as the result of the employer's violation of this Chapter plus an equal amount of liquidated damages. Aggrieved persons shall also be entitled to reasonable attorney's fees.

(b) Upon prevailing in an action brought pursuant to this Section, aggrieved persons shall be entitled to such legal or equitable relief as may be appropriate to remedy the violation, including, without limitation, reinstatement in employment, back pay and injunctive relief.

(c) The City Solicitor may bring a civil action to enforce this Chapter. The City Solicitor may seek injunctive relief. In addition to injunctive relief, or in lieu thereof, for any employer or other person found to have willfully violated this Chapter, the City Solicitor may seek to impose a fine payable to the City.

(d) The statute of limitations for a civil action brought pursuant to this Section shall be for a period of 2 years from the date the alleged violation occurred.

(e) Actions brought pursuant to this Section may be brought as a class action pursuant to the laws of Pennsylvania.

§9-3311. Confidentiality and Nondisclosure.

An employer may not require disclosure of details relating to an employee's medical condition or the medical condition of an employee's family member as a condition of providing paid sick time under this Chapter. If an employer possesses health information about an employee or employee's family member, such information shall be treated as confidential in accordance with Pennsylvania state laws and Federal laws and not disclosed except to the affected employee or with the permission of the affected employee. *This provision shall not apply if compliance would cause an employer to violate any other law, regulation or licensing standard.*

§9-3312. Encouragement of More Generous Sick Time Policies; No Effect on More Generous Policies.

(1) Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to discourage or prohibit an employer from the adoption or retention of a paid sick time policy more generous than the one required herein.

(2) Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed as diminishing the obligation of an employer to comply with any contract, collective bargaining agreement, employment benefit plan or other agreement providing

more generous sick time to an employee than required herein.

(3) Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed as diminishing the rights of public employees regarding paid sick time or use of sick time as provided under Pennsylvania law.

§9-3313. Other Legal Requirements.

This Chapter provides minimum requirements pertaining to paid sick time and shall not be construed to preempt, limit, or otherwise affect the applicability of any other law, regulation, requirement, policy, or standard that provides for greater accrual or use by employees of sick time, whether paid or unpaid, or that extends other protections to employees.

§9-3314. Severability.

If any provision of this Chapter or application thereof to any person or circumstance is judged invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the Chapter which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Chapter are declared severable.

SECTION 2. Effective Date. This Ordinance will take effect 90 days following final approval.

Explanation:

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted.

Italics indicate new matter added.