

Resolutions

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Supporting Paid Family and Medical Leave in Illinois and America

Submitted by Delegate Steven M. Powell, UFCW Local 881

WHEREAS, the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted millions of American workers who have fallen ill and passed away due to infection, plunged our economy into a recession, caused severe economic displacement of tens of millions, and put millions of workers on the frontlines of a global pandemic which has further highlighted the disparity of the United States of America being among one of the only industrialized nations that does not have a national paid sick days law; and

WHEREAS, elected officials at all levels have met the moment in the last four months enacting temporary sick leave measures to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Governor JB Pritzker should be commended for enacting an emergency sick leave policy via executive order that relies on workers going through the state's unemployment insurance system. Many in the Illinois federal delegation voted for the first national paid sick leave policy in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, that, at minimum, focuses on mid-sized companies but unfortunately leaves out tens of millions of workers who are employed by the largest corporations and millions more in companies that can apply for a waiver; and

WHEREAS, the temporary federal sick leave policy is set to expire on December 31st, 2020; and

WHEREAS, during a global pandemic sickening millions, Illinois has gone another legislative session that didn't see enactment of a statewide paid sick days law despite unprecedented support from the general public and our elected leaders; and

WHEREAS, even without a global pandemic wreaking havoc, everyday employees in every industry need time away from the workplace to tend to their health, the health of a loved one, or for reasons related to domestic or sexual violence. Parents and guardians and caretakers who are without paid sick benefits are faced with loss of income and may even risk losing their jobs when a child or family member is ill or needs medical care; and

WHEREAS, companies who currently provide sick leave to their employees should be commended as should local labor unions who collectively bargain for this fundamental right; and

WHEREAS, the city of Chicago and Cook County made history in 2016 by passing earned sick leave ordinances that will provide over 900,000 workers in the City and County with the ability to earn up to five compensated sick days a year and have seen further efforts to strengthen this benefit during the COVID-19 pandemic so there is no retaliation for utilization of earned leave; and

WHEREAS, more than 40% of all workers in Illinois – over 2 million people outside of Cook County—have no right to a single paid sick day, including 80% of those in the food service sector; and

WHEREAS, 75% of low-wage workers do not receive paid sick days and cannot forfeit a day's work, including 78% of working mothers with school aged children, which also include overwhelmingly Black and Latino workers; and

WHEREAS, organized labor, which has been central to the legislative and coalition efforts to pass earned sick leave at the local level, now must turn its focus towards making Illinois the 16th state in the nation to require that all workers have the ability to take time off to care for themselves or a loved one and not lose wages or their jobs; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Illinois AFL-CIO commends the Earned Sick Leave coalition, of which many labor unions are involved in, for their work in passing sick leave legislation in Chicago and Cook County; and be it further

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RESOLVED, that the Illinois AFL-CIO calls on the members of the Illinois General Assembly and the Governor to pass and sign a bill in the 2020 veto session or the 2021 legislative session to expand earned sick leave to the two million workers in the state that do not currently have earned sick days; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Illinois AFL-CIO will transmit a copy of this resolution to the Central Labor Councils and its affiliates throughout the State of Illinois to support and encourage efforts to pass earned sick leave legislation similar to what Chicago and Cook County, have accomplished.