

## **OHIO HEALTHY FAMILIES ACT—IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **What is it?**

The Ohio Healthy Families Act would require businesses with more than 25 workers to allow full-time employees to earn 7 paid sick days per year. Part-time workers could earn a smaller, pro-rated number of paid sick days depending on the number of hours worked.

### **Why Paid Sick Leave?**

- Too many Ohioans are forced every day to choose between a sick child or parent and their paycheck. That's just wrong. It's bad for Ohio's middle class families and it's ultimately bad for Ohio businesses.
- Executives and politicians get to take paid time off when they are ill or when they need to take care of a sick child or spouse. Aren't Ohio's middle class families just as important?
- This is about basic fairness and fundamental American values. In America, we value our families and we put taking care of our families first.
- This is a reasonable measure that is careful not to place an undue burden on small companies—that's why it doesn't apply to companies with 25 or fewer employees.

### **How much will this cost Ohio employers?**

- The really important question is how much employers will save if they embrace this issue through greater productivity, reduced absenteeism and illness being spread, and higher retention of employees. Some estimates are that it could save Ohio businesses hundreds of millions each year. We will be releasing more statistics in the months ahead as research is completed on the savings for Ohio's businesses.
- According to the National Partnership for Women and Families, the average costs to allow workers to earn paid sick days would be 35 cents per day per full-time employee. **That's less than it costs to mail a letter.**
- Already some corporate lobbyists are issuing a knee-jerk response to this proposal by saying it will be bad for business and threatening to cut jobs. This is the same tired rhetoric and empty threats we've heard for years about other common-sense measures that have made huge improvements in the lives of Americans— policies like the 40-hour work week, the Family and Medical Leave Act, Social Security and the minimum wage.

### **Won't this measure hurt employers who currently offer paid sick leave?**

- No. Employers are only responsible for ensuring that employees have an opportunity to earn 7 days of paid sick time. This will level the playing field for companies who are already doing the right thing and making workers' families a real priority.

### **How does this measure benefit employers?**

- The common sense measure includes protections for employers by requiring employees to produce medical certification-- such as a doctor's note-- if they are absent for more than 3 days.
- This measure can have the added benefit of boosting productivity by not requiring employees to come to work sick, spreading contagious diseases— like the flu— in the workplace and likely infecting others.
- The legislation does not call for paid sick days to roll over year to year or accrue in a "sick bank." And this law does not give workers the option of cashing in unused sick days.
- According to the National Partnership for Women and Families, sick leave contributes to reduced employee turnover and higher productivity. If workers were provided just 7 paid sick days per year, our national economy would experience a net savings of \$8.1 billion per year.

### **Who does this bill apply to?**

- Full and part-time workers would be covered under this law.

### **Have other states enacted similar laws?**

- While other states and even the federal government are looking at options to guarantee workers the right to earn paid sick days, they haven't yet put a law into effect. Ohio has the opportunity to lead the way on this important issue and make Ohio one of the most family-friendly states in America.
- In recent years, Ohio's been a leader in the wrong things—manufacturing jobs lost, home foreclosure rates, government corruption. Isn't it time for our state to be in the headlines for doing something positive for middle class families?

### **Do Ohioans support the Healthy Families Act?**

- Recent statewide polling conducted by Ohioans for Healthy Families shows that the paid sick day law receives very high support from Ohio voters.

### **Won't this proposal make it harder for Ohio companies to compete?**

- If Ohio passes the Health Families Act, our state would be seen as one of the most family-friendly states in America with some of the best employers.

- The truth is that some of the best and most profitable companies in our state and across the country are already allowing employees to earn paid sick leave because it makes them more competitive to attract and retain the best workers and it makes good economic sense.
- Unfortunately, unfair trade deals with Mexico and China have cost too many workers in Ohio and across the country their jobs in recent years. But the answer isn't to lower ourselves to their standard of treatment for workers. American and Ohio companies are making record profits year after year because of the training, work ethic and commitment of middle class American workers. The least they should get in return is the opportunity to earn paid sick days to take care of a child or spouse when they need them most.

**What about the arguments that this will encourage workers to cheat and force employers to eliminate full-time jobs?**

- It's insulting to assume that middle class workers will cheat when given the opportunity to have a similar benefit to corporate executives and politicians. That's like assuming that every CEO is cooking the books and using insider knowledge to enrich themselves and bilk investors. Or that after the CoinGate scandal, every Ohio politician is on the take.
- This law will increase employee loyalty and retention. It will increase employee satisfaction and improve middle class Ohioans' quality of life. And this measure can have the added benefit of boosting productivity by not requiring employees to come to work sick, spreading contagious diseases— like the flu— in the workplace and likely infecting others.
- Under this measure, part-time workers would also have the right to earn a pro-rated number of sick days based on their hours worked. There would be no economic benefit for employers to switch positions to part-time status to save on employees earning paid sick time. Employers will continue to make the decision on how to staff their companies based on the type of work and operations their company needs.