

LaborFamilyNEWS

www.working-families.org

WINTER/SPRING 2015

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UNIONS WIN IT!

It took 3 years of pressure, but in 2009, the perseverance paid off for up to 12,000 full-time City University of New York (CUNY) unionized faculty and professional staff who won access to 8 full weeks of paid parental leave. The Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the union that represents more than 25,000 CUNY faculty and staff (which includes the university's lab technicians, administrative, and advising staff), won the right to take the time they need to care for a newly born or adopted child without worrying about wage loss and bankruptcy.

Gaining paid leave for new parents took considerable effort: by union members who organized petitions and other actions aimed at university management and made presentations at the bargaining table and by a labor/management group assessing the cost of benefits and impact of providing paid leave. In the end, the university realized that if they were to be successful in recruiting and retaining high quality faculty and staff, paid parental leave was crucial to CUNY's claim to a family-friendly work environment.

Winning paid parental leave

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CHALLENGING WALMART

Workers Making Change

BY SILVIA FABELA

Since Walmart workers first went on strike on Black Friday 2012 to protest retaliation against workers who speak out for change, a lot has happened. The Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart) has grown from 100 workers to a national force reaching more than half of Walmart's stores. Making Change at Walmart, the coalition that supports OUR Walmart, now boasts more than 200 member organizations. Black Friday has become a new labor movement tradition. Walmart is taking note and worker pressure is starting to bring about real, substantive changes at the world's largest private employer.

Over the last year, Walmart workers made big strides toward improving the company where they work. Under pressure from workers, Walmart announced and after some delay rolled out a new scheduling system that will afford workers the opportunity to pick up extra shifts. Many workers still find themselves in forced part-time or temporary positions, but the new policy allows them the chance to augment their schedules when the company gives them too few hours.

Last year, OUR Walmart members formed a group called Respect the Bump to fight for the fair treatment of women and families. Women from around the country began chatting in Facebook groups and soon found that all too often, Walmart workers were afraid to lose their job or be forced onto unpaid leave due to their pregnancies. Many concealed the pregnancy as long as possible, while others were refused even the most basic accommodations like a stool, bottle of water or extra bathroom breaks. The women sent a letter to Walmart and took action to put a policy change on the company's shareholders meeting proposal list. Walmart quickly altered the policy, promising basic accommodations at least to women with pregnancy-related complications.

Just last fall, Walmart workers held protests and participated in civil disobedience where Walmart's owners, the Waltons, live and work. On the heels of the three-city demonstration, Walmart CEO Doug McMillon announced that

pressure on the company hit an all-time high following the largest Black Friday strikes and protests in company history.

"Because of a strong and organized movement that includes many UFCW members, half a million Walmart workers will now get a raise," said UFCW International President Marc Perrone. "Because workers spoke out, \$1 billion will now go directly into our economy instead of onto the Walton family's balance sheet."

Making Change at Walmart and OUR Walmart are creating real changes at Walmart and building support across the country. But rather than paying \$15 an hour and providing full-time hours, the company continues to fight its workers at every turn. Walmart and store managers are illegally spying on and even firing workers who spoke out for an end to retaliation last Black Friday season. Walmart workers and supporters are standing up to the Walton family and store managers and calling on them to reinstate workers who have been illegally fired, discipline managers who are violating workers' rights and change the culture of intimidation at the company. Walmart needs to listen to the workers who help build \$16 billion in profits for the company. **You can join the movement to change Walmart and help workers fight back against retaliation by signing their petition at Wanted.Forrespect.org.**

"Because of a strong and organized movement that includes many UFCW members, half a million Walmart workers will now get a raise..."

the company would pay all their workers above minimum wage. While the announcement falls far short of the workers' cries for \$15 an hour and access to full-time work, it is a major shift in Walmart's policy and a gain for the lowest paid workers.

Just last month, Walmart made a downpayment on their wage increases with a raise for all hourly employees to \$9 an hour by April and \$10 an hour by next year. The move comes after public

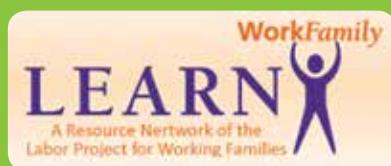


UNIONS WIN IT!

FROM PAGE 1

for full-time workers wasn't enough, especially when part-time workers dominate the higher education professions. In 2014, the PSC won access to a stable health insurance program for nearly two thousand eligible part-time faculty. According to Executive Director Deborah Bell, near the top of the list of bargaining goals for this year and beyond are bereavement leave for all members and sick leave accrual for part-time faculty. Currently, part-timers can accrue only one sick day per semester "and if they were healthy for a particular semester, they would lose that paid sick day when a new semester begins". Bell is confident the union will make further benefit gains for part-timers, "because that's what unions do, they win for working families".

PSC was the first public sector union in New York State to win paid parental leave at the bargaining table. The Time to Care: New York State Paid Family Leave Coalition is currently taking up the charge to get paid leave for all New Yorkers - unionized or not. Visit timetocareny.org to learn more and let's get paid leave for all workers in New York and beyond.



For our bargaining resources, visit www.learnworkfamily.org

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INSIDE STORY

NEARLY 10 MILLION MORE WORKERS

Now have the right to earn paid sick time

BY CAROL JOYNER

Following wins in Tacoma, WA and Philadelphia, nearly 10 million Americans will newly have the right to take some job-protected paid sick days because their city or state has passed a law. This is significant because the US lags behind 155 other countries in guaranteeing the right to recover from illness without losing a day's pay or possibly a job. The impact on our nation's economy is tremendous.

When Leah Pimental, a mom and non-profit worker in San Francisco, rushed her young son Lawrence to the emergency room because all attempts to calm his asthma attack at home failed, she was able to do so without losing her job or pay. "Without paid sick days, my son would have died, according to the doctor," Leah said. "If he had fallen asleep he may not have woken. Because of paid sick days, I was able to care for my son without worrying about job security." When San Francisco voters passed paid sick days in 2006, they aimed to address public health and economic conditions. Did they know they'd also be saving lives?

Unlike Leah, Doreen Hicks, a Dundalk, MD, resident who works at Oriole Park at Camden Yards and M&T Bank Stadium, said she often makes the difficult choice to work when she is not well because staying home without sick days means

losing income she needs to provide for her family.

Doreen has joined the Working Matters Coalition to fight for paid sick days in Maryland. In her recent testimony to the Senate Finance Committee, she told lawmakers, "Paid sick leave would help my family out so much. It would give me a chance to get well and come back to work healthy." The difference between San Francisco and the state of Maryland is huge: family income, emotional well being, job retention and economic stability.

Momentum for paid sick days is growing around the country. We see that in our collective wins, in the numbers of cities and states planning to introduce paid sick time laws and in the growing number of progressive organizations making paid sick days a part of their core mission. Most recently we saw President Obama in the State of the Union address urge state and local governments to pass paid sick days. He also urged Congress to act. "Send me a bill that gives every worker in America the opportunity to earn seven days of paid sick leave," he said. "It's the right thing to do."

The President was referring to the Healthy Families Act (HFA). The Healthy Families Act is our national solution to workers being able to stay home when illness strikes them or a family member -

The three states and eighteen cities with a paid sick days law and the number of workers who are or will soon be covered are:

California (6.5 million)
Connecticut (257,000)
Massachusetts (910,000)
San Francisco, CA (115,800)
Oakland, CA (56,000)
Portland, OR (120,000)
Eugene, OR (25,310)
Seattle, WA (190,000)
Tacoma, WA (40,000)
New York City (1.2 million)
Jersey City, NJ (30,000)
Newark, NJ (45,000)
Bloomfield, East Orange, Montclair, Trenton, Passaic, Paterson and Irvington, NJ (82,600)
Philadelphia, PA (200,000)
Washington, DC (190,300)

Currently, there are 10 or more locales across the country fighting for the right to rest and recover when sick - **join the fight!**



Leah Pimental and family – her story and others can be found at www.familyvaluesatwork.org/stories

we need this law more than ever. If the HFA were passed, 90% of the private sector workforce would be able to stay home to recover from a cold, flu, or other contagion; they'd be able to take care of a sick family member.

First introduced by the late Senator Ted Kennedy almost 10 years ago, the Healthy Families Act was recently reintroduced by Senator Patty Murray (WA) and Representative Rosa DeLauro (CT). It calls for:

- Employers with 15 or more employees who work a minimum of 20 or more weeks per year to be able to earn 1 hour for every 30 hours worked, up to 56 hours a year. For most full time workers, that means up to 7 days per year of earned sick time.

What we've been up to.



Senate Hearing on Economic Security.



Pregnancy Discrimination Rally in Support of Peggy Young



National Organizers Workshop with Bobby Godinez from the Boilermakers Union.

- Employers with less than 15 employees will be required to provide up to 7 job-protected, unpaid days off for sick time.

The law allows employees to use this earned time to: meet their own medical needs; care for the medical needs of family members (defined as people related "through blood or affinity"); or seek medical attention, assist a related person, take legal action, or engage in other specified activities relating to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Among other protections, the HFA prohibits an employer from interfering with an employee's ability to exercise these rights. That means absence control policies that assign disciplinary points could not be used for time taken under this law.

Join the fight for paid sick leave. If your city or state has passed a paid sick leave law, make sure your union codifies and protects this right in your next collective bargaining agreement. If your city or state is campaigning for a local paid sick time law, have your local sign on to the coalition, attend the hearings, circulate petitions, tweet and Facebook the actions and send information out to union members whose loved ones often live without this minimum standard. On a national level - fight for the HFA: visit or call your Congressperson, organize postcard campaigns for your members. It's time to join the rest of the world in providing this basic right.

For more information on how you can get involved, contact the LPWF at info@working-families.org.



"Through various strong efforts of SEIU and our community allies such as the Labor Project for Working Families, we are increasing public support for those joining together not only to raise wages but to: create good jobs and raise workplace standards for everyone; provide economic security for all Americans; fix our broken immigration system; and protect and expand our democracy."

– SEIU International President Mary Kay Henry

Here are the 2015 Family Values @ Work campaigns: Join the Fight!

CA: California Work & Family Coalition

Expand state earned sick days (ESD) bill; pass statewide fair scheduling; win ESD for all L.A. workers. <http://workfamilyca.org>. jenya.cassidy@thenextgeneration.org

CO: FAMILI Act Coalition

Win statewide family and medical leave insurance (FMLI). www.cofamli.com, erin@9to5.org

CT: CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave and CT Working Families

Win statewide FMLI; protect and expand statewide ESD. <http://paidfamilyleavect.org>. cbailey@cwealf.org, lfarrell@workingfamilies.org

DC: Just Pay Coalition

ESD implementation; win FMLI and fair scheduling proposals. www.knowyourrightsdcc.org. swadhawan@dcejc.org

FL: Win statewide ESD. www.orgnow.org, www.sfvoices.org, www.cfjwj.org, www.rocunited.org/miami; stephanie@organizeflorida.org, kit@sfvoicesforworkingfamilies.org, centralfljwj@gmail.com, or yesenia@rocunited.org

GA: Georgia Job/Family Collaborative

Win statewide Family Care Act. www.gaworkingfamilies.org. charmaine@9to5.org

IL: Illinois Paid Leave Coalition and Earned Sick Time Chicago

Win Chicago ESD and statewide ESD policies. www.sicktimechicago.org. www.sickdaysillinois.org, mjosephs@womenemployed.org

MA: Raise Up Massachusetts

Implementation of statewide ESD and win statewide FMLI. <http://coalitionforsocialjustice.org/index.php/paid-family-medical-leave>. dfastino@aol.com

MD: Working Matters

Win statewide ESD and ESD in one county. <http://mdpaysicksickdays.wordpress.com>. melissa@jotf.org

ME: Coalition-building for statewide ESD and FMLI. www.mainewomenspolicycenter.org. etownsend@mainewomen.org

MI: Mothering Justice

Win statewide ESD and FMLI. <http://www.motheringjustice.org/mamas-agenda.html>. danielle@motheringjustice.org

MN: Minnesota Benefits

Win statewide ESD and some municipal ESD policies. <http://mnbenefitscampaign.org/about-us>. chris@takeactionminnesota.org

NC: North Carolina Families Care Coalition

Win statewide FMLI and ESD; statewide pregnancy nondiscrimination. www.ncfamiliescare.org; allan@ncjustice.org

NJ: New Jersey Time to Care Coalition

Win statewide ESD. www.njtimetocare.com, kwhite@work.rutgers.edu, phyllis@njcitizenaction.org

NY: New York Paid Leave Coalition

Win statewide FMLI. <http://timetocareny.org>. ericwilliams.nypfli@gmail.com

OR: Fair Shot for All Coalition

Win statewide ESD policy. www.fairshotoregon.org. andrea@familyforwardoregon.org

PA: Coalition for Healthy Families and Workplaces

ESD implementation in Philadelphia; win statewide ESD proposal. www.phillyearnsicksickdays.com, mbellesorte@pathwayspa.org

RI: WE Care RI Coalition

Implementation of the statewide FMLI; win pregnancy nondiscrimination policy. www.wecareri.org, shanna@wfri.org

VT: Vermont Earned Sick Days Coalition

Win statewide ESD policy. www.facebook.com/VTPaidSickDaysCoalition. lindsay@mainstreetalliance.org, james@workerscenter.org

WA: Washington Work and Family Coalition

Win statewide FMLI and ESD. <http://waworkandfamily.org>. marilyn@eionline.org

WI: Keep Families First Coalition

Defend state FMLA program; win statewide FMLI policy. www.keepfamiliesfirst.org. martha@9to5.org



"Increasing the minimum wage won't be enough for low wage workers. We also have to fight the practice of last minute, unpredictable schedules. Too many workers sacrifice their health and their family's well-being when they don't know one week to the next when and how many hours they will work. Children and elders suffer when routines are disrupted, families lose child care slots when their hours change abruptly and working parents won't know if they will be able to pay rent or buy groceries when schedules fluctuate from 0 to 30 hours a week."

– **Jenya Cassidy, Director, CA Work and Family Coalition.** The Coalition played a key role in passage of the San Francisco Retail Worker Bill of Rights, improving work schedules for thousands.

CAROL'S CORNER

The Times, They Are A Changing....

The past months have brought real energy to the fight for economic justice. Think about it: in November we saw paid sick days and minimum wage win at the ballot in every contest.



We've seen millions of workers striking for \$15 per hour and the right to join a union, and Walmart Associates bending the arc of justice with incremental wins. We're not the only one's feeling it. Economic security issues dominated President Obama's state of the union address and ideas for strengthening the middle class can be found embedded in the political narrative regardless of party affiliation.

While there is a rallying cry for change, we must be clear about the changes that working families need. With millions of Americans still unable to earn a single paid sick day, particularly low-wage workers who provide direct services, we need to invest in local organizing for paid sick days and fight for the Healthy Families Act which aims to cover 90% of the workforce. Workers also need longer term care like the FAMILY Act which is built on an insurance model where the dollars are pooled together for folks to use upon the birth or adoption of a baby, to recover from an illness or surgery or to care for a sick family member. And as our economy recovers in a manner more suitable to Wall St. than workers, we need the added protections from the Schedules That Work bill which requires employers to discuss scheduling needs, restricts just-in-time scheduling practices and gives workers the right to request a schedule that works for caregiving, college courses, second jobs and more. And finally, Equal Pay Days are coming in April. Once again we'll begin to add up the number of additional days in 2015 that women and men of color must work to catch up with the white male pay rate in 2014 for comparable work. Can't wait to chip away at this wage disparity by finally passing the Paycheck Fairness Act.

As everyone begins speaking to the middle class again, don't be fooled by the "fake flexibility" policies or tax cuts for corporations that are disguised as paid family leave solutions. Keep the rallying cry for \$15 high and the fights for justice on every front strong. Indeed, the times they are a changing, but not fast enough and not for everyone. Onward!

In Solidarity,
Carol Joyner

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