

# Workplace Partnership Group

## Summary of Listening Sessions and Commentary

Over 400 comments were received in hand-written comments at public sessions, online comments submitted during the Workplace Partnership Group's work, and through written comments to City Council on this topic during prior discussion and debate. A sampling of the range and depth of commentary is shared here.

Many *"appreciate the City's efforts"* and value the Council's consideration of the topic. *"This is a great, progressive city and ensuring that people can take time off of work when they are ill is essential to the city's well being."* In 2015, City staff received 420 comments in favor of Council action on this topic.

Comments on this topic in earlier rounds of discussion yielded as many as 90 comments on the potential negative impacts to businesses including regulatory burdens, lost profitability and concerns about competitiveness in a City-of-Minneapolis-only policy.

*"The provision of a policy like this is essential for low-wage employees now lacking paid sick time off, for whom the question often comes down to: do I work, or do I eat?"*

Commenters noted the need to provide protections for both employers and employees in cases of abusive practice; and to reduce/eliminate the risk of retaliatory practice or threat of job loss due to illness.

There is concern among nonprofit employers and those in publicly regulated businesses about having to *"increase our fundraising to cover this added benefit (and it is not a compelling reason for our donors to contribute – just to make one specific city's regulation)"* or try to *"cost shift to other payers"*.

Small and independent businesses noted that they would likely have to increase prices to cover additional operating costs...something that risks their competitiveness in the marketplace.

Encouragement from many employers to *"[l]imit the scope of this effort"* to those who are most affected. Similarly, many voiced concern that *"[h]aving to pay sick time for a part time employee is very difficult."*

*"I own a small/"micro" business with less than 5 employees that has been in operation for the past 5 years. We gross a very modest revenue and have committed ourselves to providing a living wage, fair scheduling, & sick & safe time to our employees (both PT and FT). As a result, we've achieved sustainable growth and success in our industry. If we can do this, any small business owner with a commitment to their community can."*

Many commenters suggested that implementation should consider a phased-in approach, giving businesses time to learn, adjust, and plan for the change.

There was also strong support for an education and outreach component to this policy. Many employees may already have these benefits, but may not understand how to make use of them. Consider a phased-in approach, giving businesses time to learn, adjust, and plan for the change.

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## Summary of Listening Sessions and Commentary

In 14 listening sessions across multiple industry sectors, racial/ethnic communities, and geographies, with more than 500 attendees total

### WE HEARD:

#### VALUE PROPOSITION

- **Healthy lives**
  - Well-being of Minneapolis residents, workers, visitors and others being served by Minneapolis businesses
- **Great workplaces**
  - Well-being of Minneapolis workers: broad support for workers well-being
  - Productivity of Minneapolis-based businesses: While seeing challenges, there is opportunity to create more dependable workers.
  - Build on (or create) trusting work relationships

#### POLICY SOLUTIONS

- Simple, Clear, and perhaps not uniform...
- Reward work: earn time and give flexibility
- Focus attention on those who don't have any access. Don't mess up existing policies & contracts
- Be as clear as possible about potential business costs and mitigate or reward if possible

#### IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS

- Tend to retaliation to protect employees and potential for abuse to protect employers
- Consider (strongly) the possibility that this could be done more easily and effectively at the regional or state level
- Ensure process for existing sick/paid time off policies that meet minimum standards to be deemed in compliance
- Allow for time to phase-in – Educate, inform, and support!
- Designate a single point of contact to address employee and employer concerns
- Caution regarding City bureaucracy to manage and monitor implementation

