



Business and  
Professional  
Women/USA

February 8, 2007

Dear Honorable \_\_\_\_\_ :

First let me thank you for the work you do in Washington on my behalf.

As a member of Business and Professional Women/USA, I urge you to co-sponsor "The Healthy Families Act" a groundbreaking bill that will help working Americans and their families deal with pressing medical needs while maintaining their economic stability. "The Healthy Families Act" provides full-time employees with seven paid sick days a year to be used for their own medical needs or to tend to the medical needs of a child, spouse or parent. Part-time employees receive a pro-rata share of paid sick days.

Our workforce is our nation's most precious resource. It is essential that workers have the ability to take time off to get regular preventive medical check-ups or recover from illness. But many hardworking Americans do not have access to this health care. Almost half (47%) of our private sector workforce has no paid sick days. The situation is even worse for those with children. Eighty-six million Americans do not have paid sick days that they can use to care for a sick child. Instead, these parents are often forced to send an ill child to school, leave a child home alone, or ask an older sibling to miss school to watch their brother or sister.

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This is not just an issue for families with children. Nearly four in ten employees report that they have missed work due to elder care responsibilities. And this number is likely to grow higher, as nearly two-thirds of Americans under age sixty expect to be responsible for the care of an elderly relative by 2008.

Healthy workers are the key to a healthy, productive and vibrant economy. Without sick days, employees faced with illness repeatedly go to work sick, spreading illnesses to their colleagues and lowering overall productivity. Nearly half of HR executives say that "presenteeism" - employees coming to work even though they are ill - is a problem in their companies. Employers would benefit from reduced turnover, higher productivity, and reducing the spread of contagion in the workplace. One study estimates that if workers were provided just 7 paid sick days per year, our national economy would experience a net savings of \$8.2 billion per year.

We urge you to demonstrate your commitment to America's hardworking families by becoming a co-sponsor of "The Healthy Families Act." Thank you.

Sincerely,

My address is:



## The Healthy Families Act

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The Healthy Families Act would provide full-time employees with seven paid sick days a year to be used for their own medical needs or to tend to the medical needs of a child, spouse or parent. Part-time employees receive a pro-rata share of paid sick days.

### **Important Features of The Healthy Families Act:**

**Eligible Employee:** Employees who work at least 20 hours per work or 1000 hours annually.

**Covered Employer:** All employers (public and private) with at least 15 employees.

**Specifics of Benefit:** 7 days of paid sick leave a year for full-time employees and a pro-rata amount for part-time employees. Employees who request at least 3 consecutive days may be required to obtain doctor certification.

**Employer Requirements:** Employers must post notice of the availability of paid sick leave and how to file an enforcement action; they may not prevent, interfere with, discriminate against or deny the exercise of the employee's right to paid sick leave; they must keep records regarding compliance.

**Current Leave Policies:** An employer who already provides comparable or better paid leave will not have to modify its benefit plans.

**Enforcement:** Secretary of Labor has investigative authority.

### **Why is the Healthy Families Act Needed?**

- **Almost half (47%) of full-time, private-sector workers have NO paid sick days**, meaning that 59 million working Americans can't take a single paid sick day to care for their own health.
- **The problem is particularly acute for working women**, who are still predominantly responsible for meeting family caregiving needs. Almost half (49%) of working mothers report that they must miss work when a child is sick. And of these mothers, 49% do not get paid when they miss work to care for a sick child.
- **Eighty-six million working Americans do not have paid sick days to use to care for a sick child.** Recent research finds that parents without at-home caregivers need about 4 days per year to care for sick school-age children.
- **More families will be caring for an elderly parent in the future.** As baby boomers head toward retirement, more working families will be faced with providing care for elderly parents. In one longitudinal study, more than a third of Americans (35 percent) had significant elder care responsibilities, and more than a third of this group were forced to reduce their work hours or take time off to provide care.
- **Healthy workers are critical to a healthy, productive, and vibrant economy.** Employers would benefit from reduced turnover, higher productivity, and reducing the spread of contagion in the workplace. If workers were provided just 7 paid sick days per year, our national economy would experience a net savings of \$8.2 billion per year.