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DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES PAID SAFE LEAVE LAW NOW IN EFFECT

New York City first in nation to extend safe leave to survivors of human trafficking

NEW YORK— Mayor de Blasio and Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Lorelei Salas today announced that the Paid Sick and Safe Leave Law is now in effect. The law allows employees to use their paid leave if they or a family member have been the victim of any act or threat of domestic violence, unwanted sexual contact, stalking, or human trafficking in order to plan their next steps and focus on safety without fear of penalty.

New York City is the first city in the nation to pass paid safe leave legislation that includes survivors of human trafficking. The amended law also expands the definition of family for whom safe and sick leave can be used to any individual whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of family.

“The Paid Sick and Safe Leave law sends a clear message to survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking – New York City stands with you,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “The City is stepping up to ensure that vulnerable individuals are able to access the care they need without jeopardizing their livelihood.”

“Survivors should never have to choose between their paycheck or the safety of themselves and children. Paid Safe Leave gives survivors in NYC the opportunity to take the time they need to stabilize their lives without worrying about losing their job,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray, Co-Chair of the Commission on Gender Equity and the Domestic Violence Task Force**.

“I am proud to support the expansion of such a crucial workplace law that allows New Yorkers the right to paid leave to care for themselves or their loved ones, without fear of retaliation from their employer,” said **DCA Commissioner Lorelei Salas**. “Safe Leave sends a clear message to New York City’s workforce – the very backbone of our great city – that we support your physical, psychological, economic health and safety and will continue to fight for your rights. I encourage all workers and employers to visit our website or to call 311 to request information about the Paid Safe and Sick Law.”

Under the new law, employees can take time off to restore their physical, psychological, and economic health or that of a family member. For example, individuals can take time off to:

- Obtain services from a domestic violence shelter, rape crisis center, or other services program
- Participate in safety planning, relocate, enroll a child in a new school or take other actions to protect their safety or that of their family members
- Meet with an attorney or social service provider to obtain information and advice related to custody; visitation; matrimonial issues; orders of protection; immigration; housing; and discrimination in employment, housing, or consumer credit
- File a domestic incident report with law enforcement or meet with a district attorney's office

“This is an important expansion of paid sick leave that will protect victims of domestic violence and other serious crimes. I thank Mayor de Blasio for implementing this groundbreaking law, as well as former Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and former Councilmember Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, whose strong advocacy made this legislation a reality,” said **City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**.

Under New York City's Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law, employers with five or more employees who work more than 80 hours per calendar year in New York City must provide paid safe and sick leave to employees. Employers with fewer than five employees must provide unpaid safe and sick leave. Accrual of safe and sick leave is at a rate of one hour of leave for every 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per calendar year, and begins on employee's first day of employment. Employees can begin using accrued leave 120 days after their first day of work. For those employers who do not frontload safe and sick leave on the first day of a new calendar year, employees must be permitted to carry over up to 40 hours of unused safe and sick leave from one calendar year to the new calendar year.

All covered employers are required to provide their employees with the new Notice of Employee of Rights that includes information about safe leave in English and, if available on the DCA website, the employee's primary language. Employers must provide the notice on the first day of an employee's employment, or by June 4, 2018, whichever is later.

“The impact New York City's Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law will have on families is tremendous,” said **Cecile Noel, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence**. “This law allows survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and stalking to use earned sick time to take time off of work to address immediate service and safety needs. It is critical for survivors to be able to maintain their economic and employment stability while also taking important steps to secure their safety.”

“Expanding paid sick leave to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking is not only the right thing to do, but will go a long way in ensuring that people at their most vulnerable are able to access the resources and services they need without sacrificing their wages,” said **Chair and Commissioner of the NYC Commission on Human Rights, Carmelyn P. Malalis**. “I applaud City Council and Mayor de Blasio for supporting this essential legislation and DCA for working to make sure that every survivor in NYC gets the time to access the resources they need to heal and remain safe.”

Since the Paid Sick Leave Law took effect in 2014, DCA's Office of Labor Policy & Standards (OLPS) has conducted more than 1,500 workers' rights related events to help employees and employers understand their rights and responsibilities under the law. In the almost four years since the Paid Sick Leave Law went into effect, the agency has closed more than 1,200 cases, securing over \$7.3 million dollars in restitution and fines for almost 23,000 employees. OLPS will collaborate with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence and community partners to conduct outreach and education to ensure that survivors know their rights under this new law.

"A Better Balance is thrilled that the Administration and City Council expanded the paid sick leave law we helped pass in 2013 to include paid time off for the safety needs of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and trafficking victims and also have recognized the diversity of families in our city and expanded the family members for whom sick and safe time can be used to include all those people who workers love and care for," said **Sherry Leiwant, Co-Founder & Co-President, A Better Balance**. "This law will make it possible for even more workers to benefit from the right to take time off to care for their health and safety needs and those of their families."

"In order to move from danger, fear, and dependence to safety, security, and independence domestic violence survivors need Safe Leave. It is the essential first step on this lifesaving journey from victim to survivor. We are grateful to our City government for making Safe Leave a reality and working to make it available for all survivors," said **Dorchen A. Leidholdt, Director of the Center for Battered Women's Legal Services, Sanctuary for Families**.

"Safe Leave is a great way to protect workers so that they have additional rights when seeking safety away their abuser," said **Suzanne Tomatore, Esq. Co-Director, Immigrant Justice Project, City Bar Justice Center**. "This new law will also help educate employers on how critical it is to access services for survivors. I have had clients lose their jobs when trying to create more security in their lives when accessing support from service providers and the courts. Safe Leave can help someone move forward with their lives with the reassurance that their job will be protected while they take time to plan for their safety and for the safety of their loved ones."

Employers and employees can visit nyc.gov/PaidSickLeave or call 311 (212-NEW-YORK outside NYC) for more information including the required [Notice of Employee Rights](#), one-page overviews for [employers](#) and [employees](#), and the [complaint form](#). DCA also developed [tools](#) to help employers keep track of employees' hours worked and safe and sick leave used, as well as model forms for verification of authorized safe and sick time used, safe and sick time. Employers and employees can also visit nyc.gov/nychope to access domestic violence related information, education and resources.

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