

MIÉRCOLES 18 DE AGOSTO DE 2010

## Su trabajo o su salud

**M**iles de padres de familias pobres se ven obligados a elegir entre su trabajo y su salud o la salud de sus hijos. El Concejo Municipal de Nueva York tiene que ponerle fin a este dilema trágico.

En Nueva York, el 65% de padres de familia con trabajo, padres de bajos recursos con niños en escuelas públicas, no tienen licencia paga por enfermedad, reveló la Community Service Society (CSS por sus siglas en inglés).

CSS encontró reducciones significativas, en todos los niveles salariales, en licencias por enfermedad desde el año 2007. Pero el efecto es más grave para las familias sin medios o alternativas. Para ellos, los problemas de salud pueden precipitarlos a hundirse en lo más profundo de la pobreza.

Trabajadores de bajos ingresos, sin días pagos por enfermedad se ven más propensos que los trabajadores con licencia paga, a ir al trabajo enfermos. Asimismo, son más propensos a mandar a sus hijos a la escuela enfermos, o dejarlos con un hermano mayor, porque no pueden tomar tiempo libre sin perder ingresos. También son más propensos que los demás trabajadores a visitar salas de emergencia.

## An overdue measure

**T**housands of poor parents are forced to choose between their job and their health or the health of their children. The New York City Council must end this tragic dilemma.

Working families are most hurt by the denial of paid sick leave. In New York City, 65 percent of working, low-income public school parents do not receive paid sick leave, as the Community Service Society (CSS) showed in its recent report "Sick in the City."

CSS found significant declines in paid sick leave since 2007 across income brackets. But the effect is most dire for families without the wherewithal or alternatives. For them, health issues can precipitate a slide deep into poverty.

Low-income workers without paid sick days are more likely than workers with paid leave to show up to their jobs sick. They are also more likely to send their children to school sick, or to rely on an older sibling, because they can't take time off without losing pay. And they are more likely than other workers to visit hospital emergency

rooms after work hours. Employed sick employees represent a health risk to the public in flu season. And defenseless children whose parents cannot properly care for them have their well-being compromised.

Latino families are especially affected: More than 7 in 10 low-income Latinos do not have paid sick days, partially attributable to their concentration in sectors with little union representation and that are least likely to offer this benefit.

The Paid Sick Time Act before the City Council calls for nine paid sick days for most employees. Businesses with less than 10 employees would have to provide five paid sick days.

Shamefully, in this city, even licensed carriage horses get paid time off and other protections against mistreatment.

The lack of paid sick leave for human beings is immoral and irresponsible. We urge City Council Speaker Christine Quinn to bring this public health measure to the Council floor for a vote, for the good of our families and our city.