



## Supporting Those Who Support Their Families

Testimony on HB 861 for the Pennsylvania House Committee on Labor and Industry

Marianne Bellesorte, Vice President of Advocacy, PathWays PA

### *About PathWays PA:*

*PathWays PA began in 1978 as the Women's Association for Women's Alternatives, one of Pennsylvania's first residential programs to keep low-income, vulnerable women together with their children. It has grown to become one of the Greater Philadelphia region's foremost providers of residential and community-based services with a focus on serving women, teens and children. Each year PathWays PA serves nearly 5,000 clients with a full complement of social services; job training and employment assistance; as well as residential programs. More information is available at [www.pathwayspa.org](http://www.pathwayspa.org).*

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On behalf of PathWays PA, I write today to urge the committee to oppose House Bill 861. If passed, this legislation would stop local governments from making decisions that best meet the needs of their economy, businesses, and workforce and communities. Additionally, it will strip Pennsylvanians of health and safety benefits they already have – including 76,000 people who live outside of Philadelphia and benefit from the city's paid sick and safe days law.

Pennsylvanians believe that local democracies are the best place to address and solve the problems in their communities. Local governments are on the frontlines in the fight to protect our public health and safety. But, if passed, HB 861 would prevent local leaders from meeting our needs. The wide mandate set out under HB 861 interferes with the local passage of a variety of laws, including legislation on wage theft, breastfeeding, domestic violence leave, gender non-discrimination, and paid sick days.

If HB 861 passes, communities will be forced to wait years for state government to act on issues of health and safety – if it takes action at all. On the issue of wage theft alone,

Pennsylvanians are losing at least \$19 million per week to non-payment or underpayment of wages. <sup>1</sup> HB 861 will take away any ability for local communities to return this money to its workers and to Pennsylvania's economy.

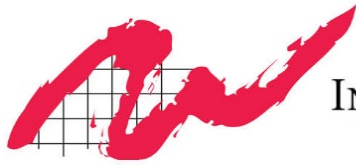
In addition to precluding a local government's right to pass the laws that best help its community, HB 861 would remove benefits already used throughout Pennsylvania. By reaching back to 2015, the law overturns local legislation that has been in effect for up to three years. Among the laws reversed is the Philadelphia paid sick and safe days law, which allows workers to earn up to 5 days per year to care for themselves and their family members during illness or for issues related to domestic violence. This law benefits 213,000 people each year, including 76,000 who live outside of Philadelphia.

HB 861's broad reach will go beyond paid sick days. By our estimates, at least 22 ordinances in municipalities ranging from Carlisle to Camp Hill to Kennett Square will be affected. This type of local interference will have unplanned and costly consequences. HB 861 will likely lead to confusion and litigation as the court system sorts through challenges to existing ordinances this law may or may not have invalidated.

At PathWays PA, we work each day to help women, children, and families escape the cycle of poverty, homelessness, and abuse. By passing good labor laws, our clients have a better chance of becoming – and staying – self-sufficient. We urge you on their behalf to oppose HB 861 and all legislation that interferes with local government's ability to do its job.

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<sup>1</sup> *Shortchanged: How Wage Theft Harms Pennsylvania's Workers and Economy* (Rep.). (2016). <https://www2.law.temple.edu/csrf/files/wagetheft-report.pdf>



INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH  
*Informing policy. Inspiring change. Improving lives.*

April 6, 2017

To: Marianne Bellesorte, Pathways PA  
From: Jessica Milli, Ph.D., Study Director, Institute for Women's Policy Research  
Re: Estimates of the Number of Philadelphia Workers Receiving New Paid Sick Time Under Philadelphia's Law

IWPR estimates that approximately 213,000 workers, 18 years and older, working in Philadelphia regardless of their place of residence, gained new access to paid sick time under Philadelphia's new law. According to IWPR estimates based on commuting behavior from the Census Bureau, approximately 36 percent of the Philadelphia workforce commutes in from outside the city. If it is assumed that these workers are as likely to have access to paid sick time as those living and working within the city, this would mean that approximately 76,500 workers gaining new coverage under the law live outside of Philadelphia and commute into the city for work (and the remaining 136,500 live and work in the city).

In spite of the substantial number of workers gaining new paid sick time coverage under Philadelphia's law, a large number of Pennsylvania workers still do not have access to paid sick time. IWPR estimates that approximately 1.6 million workers in Pennsylvania do not have access to paid sick time.

### **Methodology**

The methodology employed to estimate the number of people that do not have access to paid sick days and the impact of exemptions based on working hours controls for both differences in the treatment of race/ethnicity/gender groups and differences in characteristics specific to Philadelphia/Pennsylvania workers that are correlated with access to paid sick days such as occupation, industry, health insurance coverage, and work hours. The estimates are based in part on an analysis of 41,760 employed, adult respondents to the 2013-2015 administrations of the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) nationwide. Access to paid sick days was estimated using probit regression in STATA 13 for respondent reports of access to paid sick days, and a series of independent variables for the race/ethnicity/gender groups described above, as well as controls for major geographic region, educational attainment, personal income, age, work hours (including part-time and long-hour schedules, as well as their interaction with gender), foreign-born status, health insurance coverage, occupational categories, industry of employment, and public sector employment. The regression explained a large fraction of the variance in access to paid sick days (pseudo- $R^2$  of .29). The coefficients were saved and multiplied by the mean values of the same variables from a sample of 18,088 employed respondents to the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS), who worked in Pennsylvania, regardless of their place of residence, to generate the estimates presented above. This process was also carried out on a sample of 3,795 employed respondents who lived in Philadelphia, regardless of their place of work. Place of work geography below the state level in the ACS does not allow for Philadelphia

to be completely isolated from surrounding areas. To obtain estimates of the Philadelphia workforce regardless of place of residence, our estimates were adjusted using the Commuter Adjusted Daytime Population from the Census Bureau.

If you have any questions regarding the estimates, please let me know.