

RESOLUTION NO. 30388

A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING PRIVATE EMPLOYERS
TO PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES.

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically heightened the public risk of viral transmission, particularly for essential workers, many of whom were already in economically precarious positions. Essential workers have been on the front lines risking their health to ensure that our cities continue running; and

WHEREAS, as of May 21, 2020, there were 18,961 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Tennessee, with 313 deaths, and 1,539 hospitalizations. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 31% of workers in the bottom 10th percentile of earnings distribution receive paid sick leave; and

WHEREAS, paid sick leave has broad public health benefits for entire communities. It is estimated that the lack of paid sick leave was responsible for five million incidents of flu-like illness during the H1N1 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, lack of paid sick leave makes workers more likely to go to work while sick and puts our communities at risk. Access to paid sick leave reduces presenteeism (employees showing up to work while sick) and reduces overall contagion; and

WHEREAS, a lack of access to paid sick days is particularly harmful for service industry workers. People without access to paid sick leave are 1.5 times more likely to go to work while they have a contagious illness and are nearly twice as likely to send a sick child to school or daycare than those with access to this critical protection; and

WHEREAS, workers with paid sick leave are more likely to seek preventive care than workers without paid sick leave, leading to better health outcomes as well as saving public money. Because of their ability to seek preventive care, workers with paid sick days are less likely to use hospital emergency departments, reducing national hospital emergency department visits and medical costs by \$1.1 billion annually; and

WHEREAS, low-income and minority workers are most affected by lack of paid sick leave. Workers with high levels of public contact (i.e., those working in the restaurant/service industry, childcare professionals, etc.) are among the least likely to have access to paid sick days, suggesting major implications for public health; and

WHEREAS, President Trump has signed into law the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which provide access to paid sick leave for some workers. Employees of public agencies—including state and local governments—and private entities with fewer than 500 employees may be eligible for up to 80 hours of emergency paid sick leave for purposes related to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that 1.5 million individuals in the state of Tennessee are not covered by the paid leave provisions in the FFCRA and the CARES Act, and hundreds of thousands more may be excluded under new regulations.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE, that it is hereby encouraging private employers to provide paid sick leave to their employees related to COVID-19 or another health emergency as follows:

Section 1. That the City of Chattanooga hereby goes on record as encouraging private employers of all sizes operating within Hamilton County to provide all employees with at least 80 hours of job-protected, paid sick leave annually for immediate use, for the following purposes:

1. The employee is experiencing symptoms and needs to seek medical care;
2. The employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or another public health emergency.
3. The employee has been advised by a healthcare professional to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19 or another public health emergency;
4. The employee is caring for an individual who is subject to an order as described in (2) or has been advised as described in (3);

5. The employee is caring for a child of such employee if the school or place of care of the child has been closed, or the childcare provider of such child is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions, or other precautions related to a public health emergency.

ADOPTED: June 9, 2020

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