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STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BREWER ISSUES STATEMENT ON PAID SICK TIME LEGISLATION COMPROMISE

Thank you, Speaker Quinn, for making this day possible, when a million New Yorkers will now be able to take off a day if they or their child gets sick.

After 4 years of non-stop advocacy and coalition building, I want to thank the Paid Sick Days Coalition members and my Council colleagues with all my heart for sponsoring my PST Bill Intro 97-A, and never giving up. It took 500 conference calls, hundreds of press conferences and rallies, and meetings with thousands of parents, employees, health care workers, unions, advocacy groups, non-profits, and businesses large and small. As we stand here today, 83% of New Yorkers say yes to PST because a healthy workplace is better for them and their families.

I am honored to be a member of the City Council that addressed this issue. Approximately one million New Yorkers will now have the fundamental right to a paid day off when they or a family member is ill, and no worker will be fired if they must stay home. This is a tremendous accomplishment of which all fair-minded New Yorkers can be proud.

The argument over PST was always about common sense and fairness. Although some in the business community opposed the concept of legislating PST, we can all agree that it is a false economy to send sick kids into school and sick workers into the workplace. I believe this law enshrines the principle that American exceptionalism is not just about large profits and small elites, but a workplace that is safe, fair, and respectful of the lives of workers. It returns us to a premise as old as Henry Ford, or someone I prefer, Frances Perkins: when workers get to share in the prosperity they create, everyone benefits. Workers who have an incentive to invest themselves in their jobs will remain loyal and be better employees. PST rewards these qualities.

Today we have an agreement that says to a million New Yorkers that this government of the people is not only about those who have everything, but that each of us has a right to benefits created by the labor of all.

Key Provisions of the New York City Paid Sick Time Act

The new legislation will require businesses with 20 or more employees to provide 5 paid sick days to their employees beginning April 1st 2014.

This will extend to businesses with 15 or more employees on October 1st 2015.

Employees must have worked for at least 4 months before being able to take sick leave, and part time workers will be included. Work study students are excluded. Workers in chains and franchises are covered by the bill. Manufacturing sector employees are excluded from paid sick days but covered by job protection for up to 5 unpaid days.

In addition, the bill will require that all businesses of any size provide sick leave with job protection to their employees beginning April 1st 2014.

Firms that already meet the minimum requirements of the bill will not have to provide any additional leave.

The Department of Consumer Affairs will enforce the bill. Complaints must be filed with the enforcement agency within nine months, and complaints can be filed by employees, former employees, or third parties.

The Numbers

Under this bill, 860,000 workers will now have paid sick leave beginning April 1, 2014. After October 1, 2015, the total will rise to 945,000 employees who will have paid sick leave. These numbers are based on the number of private sector workers by business establishment size as per analysis by Community Service Society of 2010 Country Business Pattern Census Data. In addition, domestic workers and workers employed in chains and franchises would be covered, but manufacturing workers without paid sick days in firms of 20 or more would not be covered. The total number of manufacturing workers is 122,000. We do not have precise estimates for these categories from publicly available data.