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March 10, 2020

Education & Labor Committee
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they educate and support in 14,000 communities, we are providing these comments for the record in connection with tomorrow's hearing, "The Healthy Families Act (H.R. 1784): Examining a Plan to Secure Paid Sick Leave for U.S. Workers." We urge you to support the Healthy Families Act because workers should not have to make the terrible choice to either stay at home to care for themselves and their loved ones, or keep their jobs.

We also ask you to support H.R. 6150, which builds on H.R. 1784 in response to the novel coronavirus and future public health emergencies by providing 14 emergency paid sick leave days to every worker, no matter how many employees a business has. In addition, H.R. 6150 allows employees to access up to 14 consecutive paid sick days in the event of a school or business closure.

Covid-19 has caused many of us—particularly educators and other workers who are regularly exposed to hundreds and even thousands of individuals—to institute best practices for good health. Yet we know that even stringent precautions are not a failsafe. Individuals from Washington State to Washington, D.C. have been diagnosed with the novel coronavirus, and we can expect additional outbreaks in the weeks to come. Currently, however, 60 percent of working people do not have paid personal medical leave. The Healthy Families Act would provide greater protections for workers by:

- Allowing employees of businesses with more than 15 workers up to seven paid sick days a year (or seven unpaid sick days if they work for businesses with fewer than 15 employees);
- Allowing employees to carry over accrued paid sick time from one year to the next;
- Allowing employees to use paid sick leave to address their own or a family member's physical or mental illness, or to attend a meeting about a child's health condition or disability;
- Allowing employees to use paid sick leave to seek medical attention or other services to address the effects of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and
- Prohibiting employers from requiring employees to search for replacement workers to cover the hours during which employees are using paid sick leave.

Having paid sick days means workers can protect their own health and also play a role in keeping their workplaces and communities healthy. We thank you for the opportunity to express our support for the Healthy Families Act and for H.R. 6150.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations

