

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Lisa Frack, Communications Director, Family Forward Oregon & Everybody Benefits Coalition: (503) 866-3378 or lisa@familyforwardoregon.org

PORTLAND CITY COUNCIL PASSES 'PROTECTED SICK TIME ACT':

Effective January 1, 2014, people working in Portland will earn sick time while they work

Portland, Oregon (March 13, 2013) – Today the Mayor and City Commissioners of Portland, Oregon voted unanimously (5 to 0) to implement an earned sick time policy that will enable people who work in the city to earn sick time while they work, making Portland the 4th U.S. city to enact such a policy. The state of Connecticut and approximately 145 countries have also adopted paid sick leave standards. This is a big forward step for Portland's economy – and all the people it touches -- that will help employees better manage their work and health simultaneously, without jeopardizing one or the other.

About the problem: This policy solves a communitywide problem that has been adversely affecting the city's public health and Portlanders' economic security, student learning, employer productivity and parental caregiving. Everybody gets sick, but without a citywide standard like the one passed today, whether a person can afford to stay home when sick, or see a doctor when needed, or care for a sick child, or even keep their job through an illness, has depended on where they work.

And that's a health equity and public health problem that the Portland City Council appropriately decided to solve. According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), about 263,000 private-sector workers in the Portland area didn't earn paid sick time in 2012, 121,300 of whom don't earn any paid time off at all. *Not an hour.* This policy will change that – for the better. And everyone in the city will benefit.

About the policy: The policy will be effective January 1, 2014 and apply to all employers whose employees work 240 or more hours per year in the city. Part-time and full-time workers will accrue paid sick and safe time at a rate of one hour for every 30 hours worked and be able to access it after 90 days on the job. For employers with five or fewer employees the time will be job-protected but not paid, and for employers with six or more employees the time will be both paid and job-protected. Accrued time will not roll over from calendar year to calendar year, nor will it be cashed out upon separation. Time can be used to care for oneself, a family member, or to handle domestic violence issues.

Everybody Benefits Coalition Coordinator and Family Forward Oregon Executive Director Andrea Paluso is pleased with both the process and the final policy:

"What an exciting moment for Portland! Our elected officials are leading our city toward a more just and healthy economy that works for more Portlanders. I am

pleased both with the road that brought us to this historic vote and with the final policy the Portland City Council has put forth - refined with deep and broad stakeholder input.

Passing this policy brings us that much closer to a place where today's employees can both provide for and responsibly care for their health and their families. Of course workers all across Oregon won't benefit from this local policy, which is why we are already working closely with our state legislators toward a similar earned sick time law that will make Oregon's entire workforce - and the economy it drives - healthier."

The Main Street Alliance of Oregon, which has 300 Portland small business members, actively supported a citywide earned sick time policy and talked to hundreds of local businesses about the problem and the solution. Jim Houser is Co-Chair of MSA's Oregon Board of Directors:

"This is an important day of celebration for Portland employers and employees alike, who are both taking a big step toward a more socially sustainable model of work that will leave our city and its economy healthier and more productive. It feels great to be part of a solution that will directly benefit so many friends, colleagues and neighbors and that positions Portland as a leader in our country when it comes to a triple-bottom line economy. It's a good day to be a Portlander and a Portland business owner!"

Ellen Bravo, Executive Director of Family Values @ Work, a national network of 20 city and state coalitions, including the Everybody Benefits Coalition in Portland, focuses on working families and puts this Portland vote in national context:

"Policies like paid sick days are about more than keeping people healthy - they're about keeping money in the pockets of working families so they can cover the basics. It holds our economy back when people lose their jobs and can't cover the grocery bill because they caught the flu. Local groups are gaining momentum and will continue to advance family-friendly policies across the country, paving the way for national standards."

READ THE FINAL ORDINANCE: <http://bit.ly/PdxFinalPolicy>
ABOUT THE PORTLAND CAMPAIGN: www.everybodybenefitspdx.org