

The New York Paid Medical Leave Coalition Laments the Absence of Paid Medical Leave in FY25 Budget

(April 23, 2024, New York) *The following is a statement from a cross-section of the New York Paid Medical Leave coalition, representing a diverse group of organizations focused on workplace rights, civil rights, health, gender justice, LGBTQ justice, and more:*

“We, the New York Paid Medical Leave coalition, are incredibly disappointed that the final FY25 budget omits the robust paid medical leave program New Yorkers need. After thirty-five years of policy neglect, the state of New York had the opportunity to finally modernize our paid medical leave program, which is also known as Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI), but these reforms fell by the wayside.

For too long, New Yorkers who need to take time off work to attend to their own health needs have only been able to access a meager \$170/week in benefits under the state’s paid medical leave program, because the weekly benefit has not changed since 1989. For New Yorkers today, \$170 is barely enough to buy groceries, let alone to support oneself and one’s family at a vulnerable time. Our coalition and our champions in the legislature have fought hard – and will continue to fight – to give all New Yorkers a decent job-protected paid medical leave benefit that would enable all New York workers to address serious health issues without risking their jobs or economic survival.

As a coalition, we represent New Yorkers who are pregnant, living with long COVID, dealing with substance use disorder, managing their mental health, fighting cancer or addressing other serious health conditions. We also represent the 1 in 5 New Yorkers who are living with disabilities. For these individuals, like so many others, access to robust paid medical leave can be life or death. It is time for New York to bring the state’s paid medical leave program up to par with its current Paid Family Leave program, which provides a decent job-protected benefit, along with the numerous other states’ paid family and medical leave programs in effect in other states throughout the country.

We know that paid medical leave is an economic justice issue, a health equity issue, a racial justice issue, a gender justice issue, and a disability justice issue, and we aren’t done fighting for a paid leave system that supports the New Yorkers who need it most. We will not give up and will continue working tirelessly towards a future where all New Yorkers have access to the robust paid medical leave benefits they deserve, and where all workers can use these benefits without fear of retaliation or losing their health insurance or jobs.

We thank our bill champions Senator Jessica Ramos and Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages for their tireless efforts to include a robust medical leave program in this year’s budget. We also thank

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Speaker of the New York State Assembly Carl Heastie for their work on this issue and recognition of the importance of a strong program in their budget proposals, as well as Governor Kathy Hochul for including a raise in paid medical leave benefits along with job-protection and health insurance continuation in her initial budget proposal.

We look forward to continuing to work with our elected leaders to finally enact the robust paid medical leave program New York needs.”

