



HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

P.O. Box 1011 | Washington, D.C. 20013-1011
www.hbadc.org

October 6, 2016

Via Electronic Mail and U.S. Mail

David Grosso
Councilmember, At-Large
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Suite 402
Washington, D.C. 20004

Charles Allen
Councilmember, Ward 6
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Suite 406
Washington, D.C. 20004

Kenyan McDuffie
Councilmember, Ward 5
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Suite 506
Washington, D.C. 20004

LaRuby May
Councilmember, Ward 8
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20004

Mary M. Cheh
Councilmember, Ward 3
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Suite 108
Washington, D.C. 20004

Elissa Silverman
Councilmember, At-Large
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Suite 408
Washington, D.C. 20004

Brianne Nadeau
Councilmember, Ward 1
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Suite 102
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: Support for Bill 21-415, "Universal Paid Leave Act of 2015"

Dear Council Members:

On behalf of the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia ("HBA-DC"), we applaud your introduction of Bill 21-415, "Universal Paid Leave Act of 2015" (the "Bill"). Our organization exists in part to promote equal justice and opportunity for all Hispanics. Established in 1977, our membership includes several hundred lawyers practicing in Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia as well as Hispanic students attending local law schools and other non-lawyer associate members. Consistent with our mission, we urge the Council of the District of Columbia to pass the Bill and establish a universal paid leave system for all District residents and for workers who are employed in the District of Columbia.

The Bill would establish a paid leave system for District residents and workers who are employed in the District of Columbia in the private sector that allows for paid family and medical leave. The Bill represents an important step forward by providing working families in the District with the flexibility and security of paid leave. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, a mere 12 percent of our nation's private sector workers have access to paid family leave when a new baby arrives or a loved one falls seriously ill.¹ In jobs where employees often have the greatest burdens and need the most flexibility, paid family leave programs are even scarcer: only 5 percent of low-wage workers are given time to care for new family members or ailing relatives.² More than 40 percent of private sector workers do not even have one paid sick day if they or their children should fall ill.³ Among those employed in the accommodation and food services, 78 percent must choose between losing pay and showing up to work sick or leaving a sick child at home alone.⁴

This is a national problem, and it is at its worst for Hispanic workers. Hispanics are the least likely to have access to paid sick days, only 38.4 percent, and paid parental leave, only 25.1 percent, of any racial or ethnic group.⁵ Hispanic workers are also the least likely group to have access to even unpaid leave – meaning that when they or a family member gets sick, they have no options.⁶

The District of Columbia, including its thriving Hispanic population, needs the Universal Paid Leave Act of 2015. The HBA-DC is confident that many of the health and economic barriers that Hispanics face would be lowered by access to paid family leave. No one should have to choose between caring for themselves and their families and keeping the jobs and income they need.

We are available to you to provide additional information as you consider this Bill, and we thank you for your attention on this important matter.

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employee Benefits Survey: *Table 32. Leave benefits: Access, private industry workers, National Compensation Survey, March 2015*, available at <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2015/ownership/private/table32a.htm> (last visited October 1, 2016).

² *Id.*

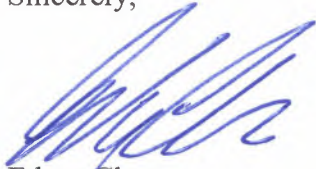
³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ U.S. Department of Labor Blog, *Latinos Should Lead on Paid Leave*, September 23, 2014, available at <https://blog.dol.gov/2014/09/23/latinos-should-lead-on-paid-leave/> (last visited October 1, 2016).

⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *American Time Use Survey: Table 1. Wage and Salary Workers with Access to Paid or Unpaid Leave at Their Main Job by Selected Characteristics, 2011 Annual Averages*, available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/leave.t01.htm> (last visited October 1, 2016).


Sincerely,



Edgar Class
President
Hispanic Bar Association of DC



Jesus Saenz
Co-Chair, Legislative & Policy Issues Committee
Hispanic Bar Association of DC



Julian Gonzalez
Co-Chair, Legislative & Policy Issues Committee
Hispanic Bar Association of DC

cc: Chairman Phil Mendelson
Councilmember Robert White Jr.
Councilmember Anita Bonds
Councilmember Jack Evans
Councilmember Brandon T. Todd
Councilmember Yvette Alexander