

Denver Women's Commission
Resolution in support for *Denver Paid Sick & Safe Time Ballot Initiative*

WHEREAS the Denver Women's Commission enhances the quality of life in Denver by assisting women in the attainment of equality and full opportunity to make Denver the best city for women; and

WHEREAS the Denver Women's Commission monitors legislation and proposed policy changes, informs the City and County of Denver, women's organizations and other stakeholders and promotes equal rights and opportunities for all women; and

WHEREAS the Denver Women's Commission assists the City and County of Denver in becoming a role model in its relationship with women as employees and as citizens; and

WHEREAS the Denver Women's Commission works to remove barriers to attaining equality and full opportunity and advocates for positive change on a variety of issues; and

WHEREAS the 2011 proposed Denver Paid Sick & Safe Time Ballot Initiative would establish a minimum number of hours of paid sick and safe time for all employers within Denver, excepting state and federal agencies, and must provide such to each of their full-time, part-time, and temporary workers in Denver; and

WHEREAS the 2011 proposed Denver Paid Sick & Safe Time measure would codify allowed uses of paid sick time for (1) physical and mental health care, diagnoses, and preventive care for the employee or to care for employee's family members; (2) business closures due to public health emergency or to care for a child whose school or care facility has closed due to public health emergency; and (3) dealing with medical, legal or relocation issues related to domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking; and

WHEREAS women often act as primary care-givers for dependents and parents; and

WHEREAS logistical challenges women face to access necessary medical care for themselves or their loved ones include scheduling appointments and securing time off to attend those appointments for themselves and with their loved ones who need care; and

WHEREAS research from the Kaiser Family Inc. indicates more than a quarter of women with incomes below 200 percent of the poverty level report not seeking medical care because they were unable to take time off of work; and

WHEREAS, workers without paid sick days are more than twice as likely as those with paid sick days to seek emergency room care because they are unable to take time off during normal work hours and parents without paid sick days are five times more likely to seek emergency room care for their children; and

WHEREAS 38% of Denverites working in the private sector are not able to take a paid sick day for themselves or to care for a sick child and parents without paid sick days are more than twice as likely to send a sick child to school or daycare than parents with paid sick days; and

WHEREAS women-dominated industries are among the least likely to offer paid sick days according to national research that has found nearly three-quarters of child care workers and food service workers lack access to paid sick time; and

WHEREAS, one in eight women (13%) and one in five women with children (20%) nationally reported they or a family member had been fired or disciplined by an employer for taking time off for an illness or to care for a sick child or family member; and

WHEREAS, since San Francisco's paid sick days law went into effect in 2007, job growth has consistently been higher in San Francisco than in neighboring counties that lack a paid sick days law and two-thirds of San Francisco businesses now say they support the law; and

WHEREAS 50% of Latina workers and 44% of African American women in Denver lack paid time off, contributing to disparities in health outcomes within communities of color;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE DENVER WOMEN'S COMMISSION supports the 2011 proposed Denver Paid Safe and Sick Time ballot initiative because loss of employment, loss of pay, or other retaliatory measures from one's employer for taking the time to obtain essential health care services prevents some women from attaining equality and full opportunity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Mayor Michael Hancock asking him to reconsider and support this ballot initiative; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Denver City Council members, Denver Commission for People with Disabilities, Commission on Aging, Denver Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Commission, Denver Latino Commission, Denver African American Commission, Denver Asian Pacific American Commission, and Denver American Indian Commission.

Passed by the Denver Women's Commission this first day of September, 2011.

Signed:

Caitlin Quander, Chair
Denver Women's Commission