

**City of Duluth Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) Task Force  
Report to the City Council on Public Input (Listening Sessions and Surveys)  
June 2017**

**Listening Sessions by the Numbers:**

129 people attended listening sessions. Of those 129, 80 people spoke in favor of ESST, 13 had concerns or were against it, and 36 listened but didn't provide testimony.

Also, 30 of the 80 supporters attended more than one meeting and may have provided testimony on more than one occasion.

The three sessions with the greatest attendance were:

1. February 17<sup>th</sup> City Council Chambers Estimated Attendance: 45 with Speakers: 19
2. March 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Action Duluth Estimated Attendance: 27 with Speakers: 26
3. April 19<sup>th</sup> Grandma's Sports Garden Estimated Attendance: 65 with Speakers: 30

**Surveys by the Numbers:**

**Employee Surveys: 449 surveys completed**

34% of survey participants do not have access to paid, earned **sick** time at work.

47% of survey participants do not have access to paid, earned **safe** time at work.

39% of employees have feared repercussions for taking time off, earned or not.

The largest industry represented in the employee surveys is Non-Profit (15%). The second largest industry represented is Healthcare (14%).

**Employer Surveys: 143 surveys completed**

90% of survey participants offer some type of earned "paid time off".

The largest industry represented in the employer surveys is Hospitality (21%). The second largest industry represented is Non-Profit (16%).

**Reflections on the Public Input from Task Force Members in Our Own Words:**

"My initial impression was that stressed working people do not need additional stress in their lives. One missed day can equal a huge deficit in their financial and emotional lives. An ordinance has the potential to be a helpful stone dropped into the pond of our city's neighborhoods. Where the ripples go is not our concern. Business owners who did not want to fill out a survey or explain their position on benefits gives me pause for thought. If we want a growing, diverse and vibrant city, this issue has to be addressed."

"I was impressed by the courage many folks showed to stand up and speak on what can be a very personal topic. The ESST Task Force worked very well as a team in the planning & execution of

the listening sessions. Going forward, I believe we'll need to consider how to weigh the input we received from advocates, the business community, and taxpayers to come up with a variety of policy options for the council to ultimately make a decision on."

"My main take away is that a lack of paid sick and safe leave puts people in very precarious and sometimes dangerous situations. We heard many stories demonstrating the problems in people's lives when they have to go to work sick or they have a family member in a domestic violence situation and they have to choose between getting a day's pay or taking care of themselves or a loved one."

"Understanding the prevalence of safety-related issues and how they impact families and kids is my main take-away. Highlighting the struggles individuals and families face as a result of domestic or sexual violence, as well as the rate of occurrence around these issues, is an essential element in this process, as the bulk of media and talking points have revolved around the sick time portion of this initiative. Creating a greater understanding by educating the people that they know many victims who can speak to their experience around violence, and the time required to address it, than is common knowledge."

"I was surprised to see how many people of the general public came to the sessions; it was apparent that many workers feel a strong need for ESST, where employers apparently felt a strong opposition, for the most part. However, it is too soon to gauge this, without a concrete proposal to analyze and respond to..."

"I've been interested in hearing from the business community how leave time works for them, with concrete examples."

"I have been honored to have been chosen for this Task Force, and have learned much about the struggles of many of our population. However, as a someone who is struggling right now to make the businesses for which I am responsible worth the owner's investment given the very challenging business cost climate in Minnesota, I am disappointed that so few businesses showed up at the sessions for fear of backlash to their business. This is real...just look at Minneapolis where folks fighting for a \$15 min wage are going on YELP and other review sites and giving poor reviews to businesses just based upon their public opposition to that particular issue. I feel this Task Force is made up of good people and thus far the dialogue has been civil and educational, but the make-up of the committee definitely leans one way. I am curious to find out how all voices will be heard in the final recommendations."

"I'm grateful to all those who took the time to speak at a listening session and take the survey. I appreciated the testimony of public health nurses and other members of the medical community who spoke about witnessing patients make the difficult decision between following through with care and returning to work. I look forward to more ideas from citizens about what could work to balance the health of our community and our businesses."

