

RESOLUTION

Calling on the United States Congress to extend payroll tax relief to small and midsize essential businesses providing paid sick leave to their employees, and the Pennsylvania General Assembly to enact legislation to expand paid sick leave eligibility for all essential workers.

WHEREAS, The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) was enacted with bipartisan support on March 18, 2020 and provides small and midsize employers refundable payroll tax credits that reimburse the cost of providing paid sick and family leave wages for employees to use COVID-19 related leave; and

WHEREAS, The FFCRA's payroll tax credits expire on December 31, 2020; and

WHEREAS, On September 10, 2020, The Philadelphia City Council passed Bill Number 200303, entitled "Public Health Emergency Leave," which currently provides immediate paid sick leave to all essential workers excluded from the FFCRA's coverage, including gig workers, healthcare workers, and those working for businesses with 500 or more employees; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's Public Health Emergency Leave will, without further action, end on December 31, 2020; and

WHEREAS, A study released on October 15, 2020 by Health Affairs Journal entitled "COVID-19 Emergency Sick Leave Has Helped Flatten The Curve In The United States" concluded that expanded paid sick leave helped flatten the curve by eliminating approximately 400 confirmed new cases per day nationwide; and

WHEREAS, According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, both Black and Latinx Philadelphians are being hospitalized at higher rates than Philadelphia's white residents, and new infection rates are highest in neighborhoods where the majority of residents are people of color; and

WHEREAS, An August 2020 study released by World Medical & Health Policy, entitled "Racial Disparities in COVID-19 Mortality Among Essential Workers in the United States," found that COVID-19 mortality was disproportionately higher among Black people, because Black workers in the United States are nearly three times more likely than white counterparts to work in healthcare support roles, and twice as likely to work in transportation jobs such as bus drivers, movers, taxi drivers and gig workers; and

WHEREAS, The same study found that Black Americans are more likely to serve in seven other occupations deemed essential during the pandemic: food preparation, building and grounds maintenance, security protective services, social work and community services, childcare, and production assembly; and

WHEREAS, As of December 1, 2020, a collaborative report by Kaiser Health News and The Guardian, entitled "Lost on the Frontline," identified 1,413 US healthcare workers who likely died of COVID-19 after helping patients during the pandemic, including 338 healthcare workers aged 65 or older; and

WHEREAS, Without intervention, ongoing workplace spread will exacerbate both the existing public health crisis and the resulting economic downturn, neither of which will be resolved by December 31, 2020; and

WHEREAS, City Council's ability to extend comprehensive emergency paid sick leave to mitigate the ongoing spread of COVID-19 and prevent further deaths of essential workers will hinge on substantial payroll tax relief from the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, The United States government and the Pennsylvania General Assembly have the opportunity to support essential workers by extending access to paid sick leave during the COVID-19 public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania General Assembly House of Representatives introduced Bill Number HB 2391, entitled the "Public Health Emergency Leave Act," on April 14, 2020, which would provide paid sick leave to all essential workers in Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, The United States House of Representatives introduced the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act ("HEROES Act") on May 12, 2020, which would expand eligibility for benefits available under the FFCRA through December 31, 2021; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Calls on the United States Congress to extend payroll tax relief to small and midsize essential businesses providing paid sick leave to their employees, and the Pennsylvania General Assembly to enact legislation to expand paid sick leave eligibility for all essential workers.

INTRODUCED BY:

Councilmember Kendra Brooks

December 3, 2020