

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Council Passes Critical Worker Protections *Ordinances Provide Pandemic-Related Sick Leave and Job Security*

SAN DIEGO – The City Council today passed two ordinances that strengthen worker protections amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proposals expand paid sick leave to cover all employees in San Diego and require certain employers to take steps to rehire or retain employees when they reopen from pandemic-related closure or company ownership changes.

“The City of San Diego must do all it can to help residents withstand the economic and health impacts of this pandemic,” Council President Georgette Gómez said. “These actions close a huge gap in federal sick-leave policy and ensure that some of our most vulnerable workers don’t permanently lose their jobs in the midst of these terrible economic conditions. I want to thank Councilmember Chris Ward for his leadership in protecting our workers.”

Paid Sick Leave

The federal Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act, which went into effect on April 1, temporarily requires employers with fewer than 500 employees to provide them with paid sick leave when they are unable to work due to COVID-19. Under the law, full-time employees are entitled to 80 hours of paid sick leave while part-time employees are entitled to paid sick leave equal to the average number of hours they work during a two-week period.

On a 7-2 vote, the Council introduced an ordinance that offers the same coverage to San Diego employees working for an employer with 500 employees or more nationally. There are approximately 147 businesses in the City with 500 or more employees within the City boundaries. Exemptions are proposed for emergency responders, healthcare workers, parcel delivery workers, and companies that provide at least 160 hours of paid sick leave annually.

This ordinance requires a second vote in order to take effect. It would remain in effect until Dec. 31, 2020, unless the federal law is extended by Congress. A second vote on this ordinance will not occur if state [Assembly Bill 186Z](#), an urgency bill that takes effect immediately if the Governor signs it, becomes law. AB 1867 would render this ordinance moot.

Recall and Retention

The second ordinance taken up today, passing on a 7-2 vote, requires certain employers to take steps to rehire or retain employees when they reopen after pandemic-related closure or company ownership changes. This measure has two components – recall and retention.

Recall: With some exceptions, employees laid off from large hotel businesses; janitorial, maintenance, and security service employees laid off from commercial properties; and employees laid off from privately-owned large event centers must be offered their former positions, or similar positions for which they are qualified, when their employer reopens after pandemic-related closure. The order in which offers are made will be based on seniority with the employer.

Retention: With some exceptions, when a large hotel changes ownership, or a company changes building service contractors, employees may only be dismissed for cause during a 90-day transition period, among other requirements.

This ordinance takes effect immediately. If state Assembly Bill 3216, which would take effect on Jan. 1, 2021, becomes law, this ordinance will sunset on Dec. 31, 2020. If AB 3216 does not become law, this ordinance will remain in effect until six months after its effective date.

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Council President Gómez represents the Ninth Council District of the City of San Diego, which includes the communities of Alvarado Estates, City Heights, College Area, College View Estates, El Cerrito, Kensington, Mountain View, Mt. Hope, Rolando, Southcrest, and Talmadge. She chairs the City of San Diego Rules Committee and sits on the Metropolitan Transit System Board of Directors and on the SANDAG Board of Directors and Executive Board.