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Paid sick days get serious backing

By Queens Courier Staff | editorial@queenscourier.com

A group of city councilmembers, community leaders and small business owners are "sick" of the lack of workers' rights.

That is why many of them gathered in Jackson Heights to launch Conscious Consumer Initiative, which seeks to highlight and promote local businesses that provide paid sick days. Supporters are also calling on the city council to pass the Paid Sick Time bill (Int 0097-2012), which would ensure that New Yorkers without access to paid sick days are able to take time off when they or their families fall ill.

"I know how important it is to take time off when you are sick to prevent disease from spreading," said Freddy Castiblanco, owner of Terraza 7 Live Music, where the March 13 event was held. "As a business owner I believe giving paid sick days is not only the right thing to do, it also builds a stronger business."

In addition to the support of small businesses, the bill in question has 35 council sponsors and is supported by a diverse coalition of labor unions, women's rights organizations, healthcare providers and community organizations.

Castiblanco and other members of Small Business United joined with Make the Road NY, which has over 4,000 Queens members, to announce the creation of a Conscious Consumer Card and a grassroots mobilization and education campaign to highlight and promote responsible businesses like Terraza 7.

Councilmember Julissa Ferraras, a sponsor of a city proposal to guarantee paid sick days, said that worker rights initiatives serve to strengthen small businesses and the communities they inhabit.

"Make the Road's Conscious Consumer initiative is a great way to let the community know which businesses offer paid sick days to their workers," said Ferraras. "Paid sick time is a small measure that can have an immediate, positive impact on business productivity, reduce unemployment and strengthen financial security for families who desperately need relief."

Jackson Heights resident and Make the Road member Rocio Loyola said that thousands of workers in Jackson Heights and Corona have suffered as a result of not having paid sick days.

"Today we're coming together to show the economic power we have as a community," he said. "We're here to educate consumers to support businesses that provide paid sick days with their dollars. That's what this is all about."

This entry was posted in [News](#) and tagged [Conscious Consumer Initiative](#), [Councilmember Julissa Ferraras](#), [Freddy Castiblanco](#), [Int 0097-2012](#), [Jackson Heights](#), [Paid Sick Time bill](#), [workers' rights](#) on [March 13, 2012 5:06 pm](#) by [Queens Courier Staff](#).



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