

## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 861

*An Act amending Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in preemptions, providing for employer mandates by municipalities.*

June 13, 2018

**TO:** Hon. Rob Kauffman, Chair, and members of the Pennsylvania House Committee on Labor & Industry

**FROM:** Karen Showalter, Pennsylvania Senior Campaign Director, MomsRising

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On behalf of MomsRising and our tens of thousands of members in Pennsylvania, I urge you to oppose House Bill 861. If passed, this legislation would prohibit local governments from making decisions that best meet the needs of their economy, businesses, and workforce and communities. When state lawmakers prevent communities from passing economic policies that work for them, they hinder economic growth and development.

HB 861 prohibits municipalities from passing or enforcing laws regarding employer policies and practices. These laws would include policies such as paid sick days laws, pay equity, sexual harassment, ban the box, and other important provisions.

Pennsylvania MomsRising members believe that local democracies are best qualified to address and solve the problems in their communities and reflect the views and values unique to their neighborhoods. HB 861 would strip local governments of their authority to make workplace reforms that help workers, consumers and the public. Communities would be forced to wait years for state government to act when the health and safety of their own residents are at risk.

In addition, HB 861 goes beyond preventing local governments from passing the best laws for their communities. By overturning laws passed after 1/1/2015, HB 861 takes away rights that workers and the economy currently have – some that have been in effect for nearly three years. In Southeastern Pennsylvania alone, over 200,000 workers would lose access to paid sick days if HB 861 passes – including 76,000 workers who live outside Philadelphia.

Local interference will have unforeseen and costly consequences. HB 861 is likely to lead to confusion and litigation as the court system sorts through challenges to existing ordinances this law may or may not invalidate.

HB 861 would strip existing paid sick time rights from MomsRising members like Thomas R. in Philadelphia, who shares:

*"I currently have paid sick leave – and I feel everyone should have it. I got burned at work once and was out 3 weeks. At the time I was feeding 5 kids and without my paid sick leave they wouldn't have been able to eat."*

When state legislators stop communities from passing their own laws or overturn existing laws, they silence the voice of the people, rob local democracies of their power, and hurt the communities' health, safety, and economic well being.

MomsRising urges you to stand with local communities and local government, and oppose both amendments to House Bill 861 and the bill itself.