

**Testimony of Commissioner Vilda Vera Mayuga
New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection**

**Before the Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection
Hearing on Introductions 780 and 1081**

January 21, 2025

Introduction

Good morning, Chair Menin, and members of the Committee. I am Vilda Vera Mayuga, Commissioner of the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP). I am joined today by my Deputy Commissioner of our Office of Labor Policy & Standards, Elizabeth Wagoner, and my Assistant Commissioner of External Affairs, Carlos Ortiz. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Introductions 780 and 1081, and to highlight our comprehensive worker protection efforts across the city.

Protecting New York's Workers

DCWP enforces key protections and offers financial empowerment resources that improve critical aspects of New Yorkers' daily economic lives. We ensure that consumers who have been deceived or exploited have recourse, that workers have a passionate defender of their rights, and that all New Yorkers have the support they need to improve their financial health. Since 2022, DCWP has helped put more than \$1 billion into the pockets of New Yorkers, through debt relief, restitution, minimum pay standards and financial empowerment programming.

DCWP serves as the City's central resource for workers in New York City, and a dedicated voice in City government to the issues workers face. DCWP enforces key municipal workplace laws that provide workers with greater stability in their schedules, income, and employment. We strive to ensure compliance with these essential workplace laws and secure restitution for workers who have faced violations in the workplace.

One of our cornerstone workplace laws is New York City's Paid Safe and Sick Leave law (PSSL), covering nearly 4 million workers across the City.¹ As a working parent myself, I rest easier knowing that if I need to take care of my children or my mother when they are sick, I will not face any repercussions when I go back to work. PSSL ensures New Yorkers have the right to take paid time off work to care for themselves or loved ones when they're sick, need preventive care, or to access services or take safety measures related to domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking or human trafficking. New Yorkers should never have to make a choice between their health and safety, or the health and safety of their loved ones, and their livelihood.

Another one of our key workplace laws, Fair Workweek, was designed to provide workers with greater job and income stability by prohibiting irregular and unpredictable scheduling practices. Since the Law went into effect in 2017, DCWP has received over 900 complaints and launched more than 400 investigations. This includes the largest worker protection settlement in New York City history, our 2022 settlement with Chipotle for violations of the Fair Workweek and

¹ <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dca/news/019-24/departments-consumer-worker-protection-celebrates-10-years-paid-safe-sick-leave>

Paid Safe and Sick Leave laws, which delivered over \$20 million in restitution to approximately 13,000 workers.² In 2023 and 2024, we built on that success, recovering over \$10 million in additional monetary relief for fast food and retail workers under the Fair Workweek Law. We are very proud of these successes, not only because they have put money back into workers' pockets for harms they experienced, but also because they ensure that companies operating in our city understand their responsibility to comply with the law.

DCWP also pairs its strong enforcement with proactive outreach. Our team works tirelessly to ensure that New Yorkers know about and can exercise their rights under the Paid Safe and Sick Leave, Temporary Schedule Change, and Fair Workweek Laws, and all of our other workplace laws. Our education and outreach efforts inform workers through presentations, informational gatherings, and high visibility events partnering with key community-based organizations. Just last year, we held 259 worker-focused outreach events, serving 34,000 constituents, and educating New Yorkers on workplace rights.

Introduction 780

Turning to today's legislation, DCWP supports Introduction 780, which would provide New Yorkers with more protected reasons to take time off in order to care for themselves or their loved ones. The bill expands the reasons a worker can use paid safe and sick time, enabling workers to care for their children or family members with disabilities. It would also allow workers to use safe and sick time for certain legal obligations, such as a fair hearing for SNAP benefits or a housing court hearing. This bill would also require 16 hours of unpaid safe and sick time in addition to the 40 or 56 hours of paid safe and sick time that the law already provides. In addition to expanding protections to the full universe of people currently covered by the Paid Safe and Sick Leave law, this bill would also benefit an estimated 1 million households in NYC with children under the age of 18,³ and 1.3 million New Yorkers who care for family members with disabilities.⁴ We strongly support these amendments that are commonsense changes to help keep New Yorkers healthy, safe, and housed. DCWP is committed to ensuring that New Yorkers can exercise their rights under the Paid Safe and Sick Leave and Temporary Schedule Change law, and we applaud Council for working to expand the protections that these laws afford.

Introduction 1081

Introduction 1081 would require DCWP to confirm receipt of every complaint alleging a violation of the Fair Workweek Law within 30 days. It would also require DCWP to notify the employer of every complaint within 90 days of receiving the complaint. While we support the intent of this bill, we do have concerns with regards to unintended negative consequences for workers and employers. Currently, confirming receipt of complaints with workers within 30 days is standard practice at DCWP, and we support memorializing this in local law. However, requiring the department to notify an employer within 90 days of a complaint we receive from a worker could potentially harm employees by revealing their identity or negatively impact our investigate process. We look forward to working with the Council on this legislation as it advances in the legislative process.

² <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/581-22/mayor-adams-department-consumer-worker-protection-settlement-chipotle-mexican#/0>

³ <https://popfactfinder.planning.nyc.gov/explorer/tracts/3002100>

⁴ <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dfta/services/caregiving.page>

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee on our essential work uplifting New Yorkers, and today's legislation. DCWP remains committed to our efforts to protect workers and keep businesses in compliance with the law in collaboration with our partners in the Council. I welcome any questions you may have for further discussion.