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LATEST LEGAL SERVICES NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON THE NEW PAID SICK LEAVE LAW AFFECTING MOST NEW JERSEY WORKERS

EDISON — Details for low- and moderate-income New Jerseyans about eligibility and other aspects of the state’s new law providing paid sick leave for most workers are the focus of the latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ).

The bilingual publication, “Looking Out For Your Legal Rights,” may be viewed online at www.lsnjlaw.org and also is available at all Legal Services offices in New Jersey.

In addition to information about sick leave, the newsletter explores details about Municipal Court fines, as well as the federal law offering legal protections for members of the armed services while on active duty.

The NJ Paid Sick Leave Act takes effect this Oct. 29 and applies to most workers — those under collective bargaining contracts are excluded — once 120 days after the paid time off has been accrued. Employers are required to pay one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours of work. Workers may accrue up to 40 hours of paid sick leave a year and can carry over up to 40 hours.

The paid time off can apply to situations beyond personal sickness, such as caring for an ailing family member, attending court sessions or school conferences and other circumstances spelled out by the law.

There are many fines, surcharges, license suspensions and other aspects of punishment available to Municipal Court judges when people do not make the stipulated payments for their infractions. Municipal Court judges, though, have the authority to waive fines, offer payment plans or set other alternatives. People are advised to inform the judges if they lack the finances to pay penalties. That is crucial because judges may only jail someone if it is determined the failure to pay was willful or without good cause.

The federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act establishes special legal protections for service members while on active duty, including, for example, delaying action on lawsuits, divorce proceedings, insurance premiums, debt collections, auto and other leases, residential leases, evictions, and many other date-determined processes. It is up to the servicemember to request the law's coverage.

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ), located in Edison, heads the state's Legal Services system, a network of five independent non-profit corporations and has been providing free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people through offices in all 21 counties for more than 50 years. Since its inception, LSNJ has provided representation in more than 2.4 million cases.

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