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KARYN POLITO
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Baker-Polito Administration Files Legislation to Cap Sick Time Accrual

Bill brings Massachusetts in line with other states and the private sector, limits accrual to no more than 1,000 total hours

BOSTON – Today, Governor Charlie Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito introduced "An Act to Reform Sick Time," aimed at limiting sick time accruals that have led to exorbitant payouts upon retirement from state government. The legislation would cap accrual of sick time for state employees in the Executive Department at no more than 1,000 hours, equivalent to six months of work. The bill grandfathers in approximately 5,800 current state employees who already have more than 1,000 hours accrued. Those employees would be capped at their current earned amount as of the date of enactment. Once the legislation is passed, the policy will take effect immediately.

"Sick leave is a benefit designed to offer employees a way to deal with health and family issues, not a retirement bonus," **said Governor Baker**. "Bringing the Commonwealth's sick leave accrual policy in line with other private and public sector employers just makes sense and is the fiscally responsible thing to do."

"This legislation ensures the use of sick time remains consistent with its intended purpose," **said Lieutenant Governor Polito**. "Benefits for Executive Department employees will remain competitive while we implement an accrual policy that is fair to Massachusetts taxpayers."

“Sick days serve an important purpose, but they must be used in an appropriate and accountable way for our compensation system to have the integrity and transparency taxpayers deserve,” **said Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr.**

“Recent media reports highlighting excessive sick leave payouts in the public higher education system clearly demonstrate the need to crack down on these types of abuses,” **said House Minority Leader Bradley H. Jones, Jr.** “The reforms proposed by the Baker-Polito Administration will help to provide greater transparency and accountability to the state’s taxpayers.”

"I am so pleased that the Governor has recognized the taxpayers' frustration at the types of "golden parachutes" we have seen recently by high ranking public employees leaving state service. I think his legislation will be an effective tool to mandate sick leave and vacation time be used correctly in the future," **said Rep. Colleen Garry.**

Under current law, employees can accrue a maximum of 15 sick days per year and those employees who retire are permitted to cash out 20% of unused sick time. In Fiscal Year 2015, 378 employees had an accrual of more than 1,000 hours upon retirement. While this represents only approximately one third the number of retiring employees, the cash-outs for these employees accounted for nearly 80% of the total cash-out cost. Based on the last three fiscal years, if fully implemented, a 1,000 hour cap on accruals would have saved an average of \$3.5M in cash-outs per year.

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