



January 28, 2021

Senator Michael Rodrigues
Chair, Senate Ways and Means Committee
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Rodrigues:

I would like to begin by wishing you well as the new legislative session gets underway. It's always reassuring to know that the working women and men of Massachusetts have an ally in the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

In reviewing Governor Baker's budget proposal for FY22, he has once again included language to cap state employee sick time accrual at 1,000 hours. First and foremost, we oppose this legislation because sick time is a condition of employment and is therefore a mandatory subject of collective bargaining. The Governor's proposal is an attempt to circumvent the collective bargaining process. Additionally, the vast majority of collective bargaining agreements already cap employee payouts at 20% of the accrued time.

In reality, a sick leave cap would only serve to harm long-term, dedicated employees who get sick and need their time, or those employees who do not get sick and, on average, receive only a small payout after a loyal career of public service. In the absence of many other benefits afforded to both private sector and public sector workers in other states, the meager sick leave payout often serves as a bridge to a newly retired employee's first pension check, which often does not arrive for 3 months.

The Governor's proposal would harm career employees without adequately addressing the large-scale executive payouts, which often become tabloid fodder and the focus of public outrage. NAGE has long been opposed to these executive payouts but the Governor's proposal misses the mark entirely.

I hope you will reject the sick leave cap proposed by the Governor and allow this issue to continue to be addressed where it belongs, at the bargaining table. I remain available to discuss this matter further at your convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David J. Holway'.

David J. Holway
National President