

February 15, 2022

Dear Members of the Tennessee General Assembly,

As local elected officials from cities & towns across our state, we understand it is critical for state and local governments to work together to address the challenges facing our communities. While the state plays an essential role in protecting the well-being of Tennesseans, local leaders also need the freedom to use every available tool to address the unique needs of our local communities. **For this reason, we urge you to support SB 1762, a common-sense bill that simply restores our authority to make our own decisions regarding an issue that is critically important to working families: paid leave.**

Paid leave can be an important tool to promote economic security, protect public health, and ultimately keep people working. However, current state law prevents us from deciding for ourselves whether to guarantee paid leave so that hard-working families in our communities can care for themselves & their loved ones. Moreover, we are prohibited from even setting standards on paid leave for contractors that are doing business with our city or county. SB 1762 would restore our authority to make these decisions locally.

Paid leave benefits businesses and the economy by improving retention, reducing turnover costs, and increasing productivity. Paid leave can also significantly reduce the spread of illness in the workplace, which keeps people working. Without paid leave, many simply cannot afford to stay home when they or a loved one are sick, which negatively impacts those individuals, their families, their co-workers, & the larger community.

As local leaders, we each face unique challenges, but we are united in calling for greater autonomy to make decisions that are best for our communities. Governor Lee said in his 2021 State of the State Address that Tennessee's approach has been to "maintain local control whenever possible."

**Enacting SB 1762 is a simple way to return authority to local leaders to make our own decisions on an issue that is vitally important to working families.**

Sincerely,

Craig Fitzhugh, Mayor of Ripley

Indya Kincannon, Mayor of Knoxville

Helen F. Stapleton, Franklin County Commissioner

Tangi C. Smith, Montgomery County Commissioner

Becky Goff, Murfreesboro School Board Member

Karen K Reynolds, Clarksville City Council Member

Jacqueline Hill, Blount County Commissioner

Seema Singh, Knoxville City Council Member

Chris Rasnic, Montgomery County Commissioner

Raquette Dotley, Chattanooga City Council Member

Lisa Prichard, Montgomery County Commissioner

Tommy L Stinnett, Blount County Commissioner