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TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR

INTRO 97 – PAID SICK LEAVE FOR EMPLOYEES

Council Chambers – City Hall

May 11, 2010

Presented by
Louis Coletti
Building Trades Employers' Association
President and CEO



Good Morning.

My name is Louis Coletti and I am the President & CEO of the Building Trades Employers' Association (BTEA), an organization representing 28 union contractor associations and over 1,700 construction managers, general contractors, and specialty trade contractors doing business in New York City.

The BTEA is in a unique position today. We have a strong partnership with the Building and Construction Trades Council and regularly appear together before the City Council to support or oppose legislation that affects our industry. However, when it comes to the current legislation proposed in Intro 97 regarding paid sick leave for employees, the BTEA and labor must agree to disagree.

Although this legislation provides an exception for the construction industry through a provision that allows a waiver to be granted and included in collective bargaining agreements, the BTEA cannot support this bill because the inclusion of this waiver gives labor an unfair advantage at the negotiating table. When we negotiate collective bargaining agreements in the construction industry, we sign agreements with labor based on an overall economic package. In other words, it is

the responsibility of the labor union to allocate spending however they choose, whether it is to increase wages, benefits, etc.

If BTEA members sit at the collective bargaining table with labor and need to request that a specific waiver be placed in agreements in order to receive an exemption from this proposed legislation, then we will be at a major disadvantage. This legislation will eliminate the equal footing that our members and labor start with when we they begin the negotiating process.

I thank the City Council for allowing me to present my comments on Intro 97. The BTEA believes that this bill has good intentions, but we cannot support it due to the waiver that must be provided in our collective bargaining agreements. Before you vote on this bill, I hope that you will seriously consider the negative effect this legislation will have on the fairness of the collective bargaining process in the New York City construction industry.

Thank you.