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## Testimony of Phil Sherwood Before the Labor Committee, February 24, 2009

Good afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and other members of the Labor Committee. My name is Phil Sherwood and I'm the Deputy Director for the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG). CCAG has approximately 25,000 member families in the state and I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today.

CCAG strongly supports **HB 6187, An Act Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave To Employees**. Families need this time to recover from illnesses, for routine medical appointments, or to care for sick family members. When so many working families or individuals are living paycheck to paycheck, it's unreasonable not to require, in the least, that employees be granted a reasonable number of paid sick days each year. To lose a couple days of pay in a given week is enough to send many family budgets into a tailspin. HB 6187 is a pro-family bill that CCAG is proud to endorse.

There are some that may argue that now is not the time to be providing paid sick leave to employees given the economic climate. Now more than ever, the time has come to invest in public health, instead of forcing families living paycheck to paycheck to lose a days pay, simply because they had to care for an ill child. It is during these economic times that working families are suffering the most. According to the Partnership for Women in Families, 40% of Connecticut's employees have no paid sick days.

This bill would greatly enhance public health and provide savings to taxpayers and businesses. Presenteeism, (the practice of employees coming to work sick) costs employers \$180 billion every year, more than the cost of absenteeism, according to the Society for Human Resources Management. Allowing families the ability to utilize preventative health care, through paid sick days, saves taxpayers in unnecessary medical costs. Preventive health care is almost always cheaper in the long run.

Enacting paid sick days is a basic workplace standard and is a reasonable requirement to reduce illness and to protect working families. We urge support of the legislature for HB 6187.

Thank you for your time.

Phil Sherwood,  
Connecticut Citizen Action Group

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# CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP

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