

Feb. 2010

*Public Hearing Labor Committee*

Paid sick days testimony in support of SB 63

Please support paid sick days, this bill is very important to families all over the state of Connecticut.

I am a bus driver in Westport and I have been working for 15 years without paid sick days. Also I work part time as a hairdresser in Hartford, to make ends meet. I am a single mother and luckily I have health coverage with my job, now I am asking for the days to get proper treatment to stay healthy.

On a typical day I interact with 150 people a day, a majority of them being children. So when I come in sick I take the risk of spreading my illness to all those people!

My boss always expects us to come to work no matter what, so I don't take time off because I do not want to risk losing my job. Last winter, I got really sick but I couldn't take the day off. I caught a stomach bug that had been doing around, working with so many kids everyday getting sick is inevitable. I had diarrhea, a fever, a cough and a headache, which made it nearly impossible to concentrate on the safety of the kids in my bus. All day I had to worry about getting to the bathroom in time. It is horrible having to drive a school bus all day with all these symptoms, but I have no other choice.

As a single working mother, I have a lot to worry about. I have to pay the bills, and I have a child to raise on my own. When my son would get sick I had to worry about him possibly getting me sick and having to miss even more days of work. Fortunately, my mother was able to watch him when he was younger. However, not everyone is lucky enough to have family members available to help out. Some of my coworkers have to bring their kids to work with them when they are sick because they cannot take a day off of work to take care of them.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Tyrika Abdul-Karriem