

**Testimony of**

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**S.B. 300 – An Act Concerning Family and Medical Leave Benefits for Certain  
Municipal Employees**

**Labor and Public Employees Committee  
March 4, 2010**

Good Afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and distinguished members of the Committee. My name is Shellye Davis and I am First Vice President of the Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals (HFP), AFT Local 2221. As a collective bargaining unit, we represent professionals who serve a diverse student population in the City of Hartford's School System.

I would like to speak briefly today on S.B. 300, An Act Concerning Family and Medical Leave Benefits for Certain Municipal Employees.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides select employees with up to Twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, employment protected leave per year. It also requires that their group medical benefits continue during the leave. FMLA, is designed to help employees balance both family and work responsibly. It also seeks to accommodate the legitimate interest of employers and it promotes equal employment opportunities for both men and women.

The HFP strongly supports this bill, and the need for our members to be covered by it. As professional public educational employees, it is imperative that we maintain a positive and focused environment for the children and families we serve, including our own. Our lives are parallel to our community; we are susceptible to the same issues confronted daily by all those striving to make a peaceful and responsible life for their loved ones and themselves. The anxiety and stress of welcoming a newborn into our family, caring for an ailing spouse, child or parent, or the recovery from an injury or serious health issue, should not have to be compounded by the fear of losing our employment and health benefits. The members of HFP are some of the most caring, creative and resourceful paraprofessionals (and people) in the country. The commitment and dedication of these men and women, who faithfully serve the Hartford School System is unparalleled. They richly deserve to have the peace of mind in knowing their service to the community is important.

The triumphs and the tragedies that inevitably affect all lives should not be rewarded by taking ones livelihood. People need to be able to take care of themselves and their families. In the grander scheme of things, we all benefit from that. Please help us and I urge you to support this bill

Thank you for your time and for this opportunity to testify before you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.