NARAL
Pro-Choice Connecticut

Labor & Public Employees Committee
Testimony of Jillian Gilchrest, Executive Director
NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut
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SB 63, An Act Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees

NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut is a statewide non-profit organization that uses the political process to ensure that women have the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive health choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion.

NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut supports SB 63, An Act Mandating Employers to Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees. We view this policy as an extremely important public health measure that will give Connecticut's low-income workers an opportunity to access much needed preventative care.

Connecticut's working poor experience significantly higher rates of serious illness and disease that in many instances could have been prevented with adequate care. The same can be said of pregnancy. In terms of prenatal care, low-income women in Connecticut have higher rates of inadequate, late or no prenatal care, have higher rates of low birth weight, and are more likely to die as a result of pregnancy than higher income earners in the state.

Adequate prenatal care is necessary for a healthy pregnancy and healthy child and is directly linked to preventing woman and child from costly health conditions later in life. Our state should be doing all that we can to ensure that low income working women be given the opportunity to attend their prenatal visits—and for a healthy pregnancy that is 12 visits. Women in Connecticut shouldn't have to choose between a healthy pregnancy & child or their paycheck.

For four years the legislature has debated the issue of mandating paid sick leave. SB 63 addresses many of the concerns that have been raised over the years and is a fair compromise. Today, you will hear from many advocates in support of paid sick leave for a variety of reasons,

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including concerns over public health and job security. In this economy, working families cannot afford to lose their job as a result of themselves or their loved ones falling ill.

You will also hear from opponents of paid sick days who perceive this legislation as a business killer, even though business owners in San Francisco where similar legislation has passed are now in favor of the measure. And Forbes Magazine attributes the real business killer to be sick workers.

Please don't let unfounded fear tactics delay this important public health measure any longer. We need to improve upon the stark health disparities that exist in our state. Please support SB 63, An Act Mandating Employers to Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees. Thank you.

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