

March 16, 2010

To: Senate Labor Committee:

I am writing to express my opposition to Senate Bill 63, which mandates that employers of fifty or more employees provide at least seven paid sick days per year to their employees.

Most companies understand that their most important resource is the employee. Hence, employers provide a wide range of voluntary benefits to support their employees, whether in group insurances, employee assistance programs, or time off benefits. Employers who fail to understand employee needs in these areas run the risk of becoming non-competitive when it comes to recruiting and retaining the talent needed to help a business grow and prosper.

However, laws that seek to regulate benefits such as paid sick time can be just as damaging to competitiveness as the employer who fails to understand the importance of providing the right mix of benefits to its employees. In mandating such benefits, little or no account is taken of that company's particular situation, what other benefits are already provided, the critical relationship between attendance and productivity, the company's ability to cover the cost of such benefits, etc. Hence, in the case of the company that I work for, Bigelow Tea, the value of fringe benefits is in some instances approaching 70%, what with family health insurance covered at 80%, paid time off benefits, short and long-term disability coverage, and the list goes on and on. Hence, SB 63 should be defeated for the following key reasons:

- SB 63 fails to consider the mix of benefits that an employer currently offers.
- SB 63 fails the very individuals it purports to support: the employees who may see cuts in other needed benefits or worse yet, job losses due to economic layoffs.
- SB 63 succeeds in making Connecticut employers even more non-competitive, particularly since it would be the only law of its kind in the United States.
- SB 63 will succeed in driving out good employers who in order to survive need to be competitive.

In conclusion, it my sincere belief that SB 63 should be defeated and I ask that you vote against this Bill. Laws that seek to so regulate the benefit practices of employers are simply bad law in any economy, and even tragic in the current economic climate.

Respectfully,

Richard J. Whalen  
Sr. VPHR Bigelow Tea