

Written Testimony of
Eileen Lesiak, Paraprofessional

**H.B. 5465 An Act Concerning Family and Medical Leave Benefits
for Certain Municipal Employees**

The Labor and Public Employees Committee
February 1, 2011

I have been employed as a paraprofessional by The Consolidated School District of New Britain for 15 years. During those years I have proudly worked side by side with dedicated teachers, helping with the education of the special needs students in our schools.

Three months after I became employed in New Britain, my mother, at age 75, needed open-heart surgery. As she was a widow who lived alone, she needed a lot of help before and after her surgery. Unfortunately without the assurance that FMLA would have provided me, I was afraid that taking too much time off to help her would cost me my job and she did not get the comfort and care that only a child can give a parent.

Although schools are only in session 180 days, working as a paraprofessional is a career chosen by individuals who are as dedicated to educating our youth as teachers are. I personally work two additional jobs to support myself in order to remain doing the work I love. However, the fact is that any accident or illness that comes my way could potentially cost me my job. The fact that I have been a stellar employee, have over 100 accumulated sick days and twenty years of experience will not guarantee that my job (and along with it my insurance) will be there for me.

I hope you will pass HB 5465 and allow paraprofessionals FMLA rights.

Respectfully submitted,
Eileen M. Lesiak