

Testimony of Sharon Beaulieu, Paraprofessional
Mayberry Elementary School, East Hartford Public Schools

HB 5465 An Act Concerning Family and Medical Leave Benefits for Certain Municipal Employees

The Labor and Public Employees Committee
February 10, 2011

My name is Sharon Beaulieu. I am an instructional paraprofessional in East Hartford. On August 18, 2008, my husband was diagnosed with brain cancer. We had to start chemotherapy right away. He had to have one of the strongest chemotherapy treatments that there was. He had to be admitted in the hospital for a week at a time.

I applied for a leave of absence so I could take care of him. He could not drive at all. The Board of Education granted me my leave without pay. I received a letter from Human Resources that I had to pay 75% of my medical insurance. That meant I had to pay \$1,100.00 at the first of the month. I was the carrier of the medical insurance. If I could not pay \$1,100.00 a month they would cancel my insurance. I was a nervous wreck! My husband has his own construction business. We had no money coming in. We were both out of work. I had a social worker at Hartford Hospital who helped us apply for the grants. We were blessed because we were able to get help.

I had applied for my husband's Social Security Disability. It took six months before we had money coming in. I applied in September 2008 and we received his first check in March 2009.

The chemo started in September 2008 and ended in February 2009. In March we started radiation treatment for 25 days straight. He received 2 more chemo treatments in June; one at the beginning of the month and the second one were at the end of June. I spent July and August at home with my husband. School started in August 2009 and I returned to work.

My husband cannot drive his truck nor does any more construction work. I pray to God that no one ever has to go through what we went through. That was the hardest year for my husband and me. My husband having brain cancer was bad enough, let alone having to worry if we did not have enough money to pay to pay the medical insurance.

Today my husband has been cancer free for one year. We thank God every day. I ask you to support HB 5465. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Beaulieu