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ASSOCIATES INC.

February 25, 2011

To: Members of the Legislature's Labor and Public Employees Committee
Subject: Reject SB 913: Mandatory Paid Time Off

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the State Legislature mandating sick leave for businesses in Connecticut. I have owned and operated a small business for over 30 years. Throughout this time, I have consistently offered a generous benefit package, including paid time off for all regular employees scheduled to work over 30 hours per week.

First, I feel such a mandate would encumber my business, which is struggling due to the continuing poor economic climate. I need to concentrate all my efforts on generating new commissions and serving the clients we have so as to protect as many jobs as possible. With unemployment taxes expected to increase and other possible new taxes being considered, I feel that small businesses have been stretched too thin and continue to receive the brunt of discussions about additional mandates and taxes.

Second, I currently provide employees with a time off package that does not stipulate that they must use the time for sick leave only. This serves two purposes: 1. Employees do not lose time if they remain healthy, and 2. Employees are not required to share health issues with us, which helps them maintain their privacy. In the past, we have offered separate sick, vacation and personal leaves, but stopped that practice several years ago. Our employees are very happy with the current policy. In addition, our policy does not end at the close of each calendar year. Time is accrued on a monthly basis to a specific cap, based on length of service. Once the employee reaches the cap, they do not accrue additional time if they do not use it. They start accruing again after they use some time. Employees do not find themselves at the end of each year scrambling to use or lose time and this also works better for the firm's productivity.

If we are forced to provide a specific amount of time for sick leave alone, we will have to rewrite our entire leave policy, segregating time specifically for sick leave. I do not believe this will be well received by staff as those who rarely use time for purposes of illness (themselves or family members) will, in effect, lose paid time off.

I strongly believe that it is time for government to stop punishing small businesses indiscriminately. While it is possible that there are firms in Connecticut who do not provide sufficient benefits to their staff, it is insulting to be treated as if all businesses behave in this manner.

Yours truly,

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