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February 28, 2011

To Members of the Labor Committee:

My name is Donna Rees, Vice President of Human Resources and Information Technology for Centrix, Inc., a manufacturing company located at 770 River Road in Shelton, CT.

I am writing to you to voice my opposition to SB 913, which requires Connecticut employers to provide paid sick leave and mandates how they need to do so. Centrix already provides its employees with a generous paid leave policy. This proposal WILL substantially increase our business costs and could force us to reevaluate the other benefits we provide our employees. If this bill passes, Centrix would have to make some tough choices.

Over the past few years, Centrix has been doing its part to create more jobs in Connecticut by carefully evaluating our people needs and then hiring 15 men and women in positions that never existed before at Centrix. In our current economy we feel fortunate to have been able to make these choices. However, we need the flexibility to determine what paid time off policies work for our company and in our industry--for financial, competitive and productivity reasons. The resources that would be required to implement and maintain this mandate would require Centrix to cut back on our employee recognition and rewards programs, tuition reimbursement and other training and development programs, all of which we believe are more valuable to both Centrix and our employees, as well as the State of Connecticut, than mandated sick leave. I think our employees would agree!

We already juggle both state and federally mandated regulations regarding FMLA, WC, ADA, COBRA, etc. When will we learn that placing unnecessary burdens on the employer does not necessarily achieve the desired result for the employee? How many more businesses have to close or move out of CT before we realize that many, if not most, CT employers and employees are already working effectively together for their mutual benefit, and mandates like this one can jeopardize that delicate relationship.

Mandating paid sick leave will force Centrix to take what we believe to be several steps backward in the evolution of our relationship with our employees. Our current paid leave policy does not require an employee to make a distinction as to why he or she needs leave—whether they are sick, or they have relatives in town they want to spend some time with, or they have a dental appointment. Our policy also pays the employee for any unused leave at the end of the year—this would have to be discontinued. We would have to break out sick and personal leave, and may have to do away with personal leave altogether. In addition, we would have to start requiring documentation (more loss of trees and increased healthcare costs passed on to employees!) substantiating the reason an

employee needs time off to try to prevent abuse. We will no longer be able to effectively use attendance as a criteria in employment decisions—a critical component to productivity and the success of our business.

I cannot urge you enough to reject this proposal and work with the business community to control labor and workplace costs in Connecticut. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna Rees". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "R".

Donna Rees
VP, Human Resources and
Information Technology