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Testimony IN SUPPORT of SB-913 for Paid Sick Days

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Testimony for the Labor Committee on the Paid Sick Days Legislation:

I am in support of the paid sick days legislation. It is important that you support this bill that will allow hard-working Connecticut employees paid sick days. I have worked many jobs, mostly in the food service industry without a single paid sick day. Most recently I worked as a supervisor for three years at the Uniquely Caffeinated Cafes.

My job required me to constantly interact with people as well as prepare food. Coming to work sick could have resulted in my spreading illness to customers. However employees had no opportunity to earn paid sick days.

Without paid sick days, being sick even just one day meant losing a big part of my paycheck. I needed all of my paycheck in order to be able to pay my bills. Losing a day or two of pay would make it very hard to make ends meet. I was a college student, working 30 plus hours a week during school, and full time during school breaks. My paycheck was not only vital to me being able to pay my bills and keep food on the table, but also being able to continue my education. I needed to work in order to pay tuition and attain my degree.

To make things even worse we were strongly discouraged from calling out sick, even without pay. The managers often threatened to write up or fire workers if they called out. I was told on more than one occasion that I would be fired if I did not come in, even though I was sick. So not only did I need to worry about paying my bills, but also potentially losing my job.

With little other option I often went to work sick. I remember going to work last year with the flu. I had a high fever and was contagious, but couldn't risk losing my pay or my job. I worked closely with several other people, as well as customers and customer's food. Other co-workers came to work sick too often with contagious illnesses like strep throat or even the swine flu. Illness was easily spread from one sick employee like me, to my co-workers and customers.

Furthermore, as a supervisor I understand that when employees came in sick they were not able to work their hardest. Working with sick co-workers not only put your health at risk, but it also made your shift harder. Sick employees worked slower and were not able to keep up during busy rushes. If a sick employee had been able to stay home and recover for a day or two, they would have been able to recover faster and get back to working at their full ability faster.

We all would have benefited if sick employees could have just stayed home. No one should go to work sick, especially not when they are handling people's food. Please support the paid sick days bill so people can stay home and not spread illness.

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