

9/13

*Testimony from Natasha Stapleton
Hartford, CT
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Committee on Labor and Public Employees in support of Senate Bill 913 for Paid Sick Days.

As a food service worker that does not receive any form of paid sick time, I am in support of this bill. Many of our restaurant workers throughout the state do not have this benefit and we all pay the consequences. We are the last people that you want going into work coughing and sneezing.

I work at a local Wendy's where I do not receive paid sick days. If I get sick I either have to stay home and deal with not being paid for that day or I go into work sick. I have had to come into work sick on many occasions. This is more frequent in the winter months when the weather is colder and more people are sick and likely to get sick. We don't want sick people serving us food in a time of year when we are all already vulnerable to sickness. Sometimes when either a fellow co-worker or myself comes into work really sick we will be sent home. Then what? We have to bite the bullet to go to work sick just to be sent home without pay anyways. This puts me behind on bills and in a tough financial situation, which I have no choice but to suffer.

Everybody truly benefits from a policy like paid sick leave. Those of us who dread the day we wake up with a fever do not know when the time will come when we fall too far behind on bills, but without paid sick time it is likely to happen eventually. We cannot afford to work without paid sick time. Our physical and financial well-being is at the mercy of people who are far removed from the reality that we live every day. Just because we are not white-collar workers does not mean we do not deserve a white-collar standard of living. We work hard and should not have to worry about our future because of a silly illness.

I know you will do the right thing and provide access to paid sick leave for the hundreds of thousands of Connecticut workers that need them most. I thank you for the time you are taking to read what I have to say and I hope it has some effect on how you see this issue. It is a real one for all of us. I am afraid our voices often go unheard and our every-day problems go unnoticed. Please think of what this bill will do for so many throughout the state.