

Testimony from Phyllis Winkler
Middletown, CT
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*Committee on Labor and Public Employees in support of Senate Bill 913 for
Paid Sick Days.*

As a veteran first grade teacher in Connecticut I am in support of Senate Bill 913 for Paid Sick Days. My colleagues and I see through our children the effects of a lack in paid sick time. A sick child in school has far-reaching repercussions.

When parents do not have the opportunity to take a day off to care for their sick child the child has to go to school ill. All too often I have children come to school because their parents don't have sick family time off. For many of these parents an unpaid day means that a bill does not get paid, groceries are a bit scarcer that week, or they are at risk of losing their jobs. The unfortunate result of this is children also not having the opportunity to stay home and get well. As with workers that lack paid sick time, students also cannot focus or do their work, especially first graders, when they feel ill. Too often a child is so miserably uncomfortable that their behavior also affects other students' ability to attend to lessons. Sick students also inevitably infect other students and staff, possibly starting the whole cycle over again.

Not offering paid sick time is an issue that pervades many areas of our society and is not just contained to a business policy. When it comes to the fragility of an individual's financial status or the collective health of our society we need to do the responsible thing in order to maintain some standard of living for us all. This is more important than insuring a few extra dollars for an already wealthy CEO.

For these reasons and many more do I support the paid sick days legislation. Paid sick days are good for the children I teach, their parents and for the rest of Connecticut.