

Testimony from Robert Hansen

Labor and Public Employees Committee on the issue of SB913,

9/13

Thank you for providing a platform for the public to voice their concerns on this issue.

I am addressing you in support of the paid sick time legislation. Connecticut has gone too long without this necessary precaution. As a food service professional I know first hand just how important this topic is.

I have been a chef for twenty-seven years. During that time I have not had sick leave as a provision. There have been times when I was sick and had to go to work sick because otherwise I would not have been able to provide for my family. With three children staying home has simply not been an option; there are bills to pay, food to put on the table and the other necessities that go along with youngsters as well as unseen or unexpected expenses. I believe no one wants to work sick. When a food service employee comes to work ill it is not malicious. I have seen servers and hosts come into work sick and watched as it spread to the other servers and then to the back of the house to the cooks and managers.

The danger behind not providing paid sick time to food service employees is that not only are servers' illnesses spreading to their coworkers but patrons of the restaurant are also exposed. The United States we had a real scare when it looked like swine flu was becoming an epidemic. Restaurants can become hotspots if there is a bad virus spreading. The employees need the ability to protect themselves, stay home, and prevent others from getting sick.

I hope my testimony helps to persuade some of you that now is the time to get this safeguard passed for the employee's health and for the public's as well. We will all benefit from this bill. It may even help Connecticut prevent future outbreaks of serious viruses. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Robert Hansen