

March 1, 2011

913



CONNECTICUT  
STATE COUNCIL

SERVICE EMPLOYEES  
INTERNATIONAL UNION  
CTW, CLC

**SB 913 AN ACT MANDATING EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES**

Testimony of Stacey Zimmerman on behalf of SEIU – CT State Council

Co-Chairs Zalaski and Prague and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **SB 913 AN ACT MANDATING EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES**. The Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council represents over 55,000 active and retired members in Connecticut. SEIU is the states largest union with both public and private sector members.

In a poll taken as recently as 2009, by **BANNON COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH** Eighty eight (89%) percent of the likely voters in the state favor paid sick leave legislation and only seven (7%) percent of the voters oppose the bill. This by the very nature of politics suggests that passing the bill is a no brainier. Popularity notwithstanding there are a remarkable amount of public policy reasons to pass such a piece of legislation.

I will only cover a few of such reasons as you are sure to hear many more of them throughout the coarse of today's hearing.

- 40% of Workers in CT Have No Paid Sick Time. (Vicky Lovell, *Everyone Gets Sick, Not Everyone has Time to Get Better*, April 2008.)
- 78% of Food Service Workers Have No Paid Sick Time. (Vicky Lovell, *Everyone Gets Sick, Not Everyone has Time to Get Better*, April 2008.)
- 77% of Low Wage Earners Lack Paid Sick Days. (Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick: Why Everyone Suffers when Workers Don't Have Paid Sick Leave*, May 2004)

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You will hear a litany of reasons why this is bad for business from a few organizations, all saying this is too expensive to implement, that no other state does this and most businesses all ready offer sick time. All of this is a cover for the fact that they are just ideologically opposed to any and all regulation.

It is the same arguments we have heard throughout history if we listen close enough. This same rhetoric have no child labor laws, no 40 hour work week, no workers compensation and no anti-discrimination laws. We live in a community and we as members of it can choose to make it better or to always maintain the status quo.

Connecticut can be a leader in public health and worker safety. We can pass a bill that will be seen as a landmark in true public policy that betters society. This is a bill that saves money down the road and possibly saves lives in the process. SEIU urges adoption.