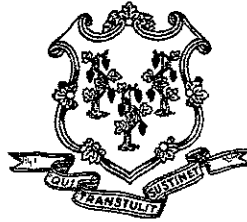


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March 1, 2011

913

Good afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski and member of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. I am here to testify in support of SB 913, AN ACT MANDATING EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES.

This bill would require employers with fifty or more employees to provide paid sick leave to certain employees for use for the employee's sickness, the employee's child's, parent's or spouse's sickness, or to deal with sexual assault or family violence issues.

Recent studies<sup>1</sup> have demonstrated that, in fact, offering paid sick time benefits the employers as well as the employees. Workers should not be forced to choose between attending work while sick or losing their jobs. The presence of

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<sup>1</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research  
**Valuing Good Health in Connecticut:  
The Costs and Benefits of Paid Sick Days**  
Kevin Miller, Ph.D., and Claudia Williams

sick workers is detrimental not only to the workers themselves but also to co-workers and the general public. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that a large percentage of workers in service industries do not have access to paid sick time; thus workers who provide services to the public have an incentive to attend work without regard for the state of their own health. This exposure can add to the spread of diseases such as H1N1. Workers should not be required to choose between protecting their own health and suffering a financial loss to protect public health.

The more workers who cannot remain at home when ill, the more likely that diseases will spread. This reality can increase healthcare costs and create economic losses for the ill employee and the employer. Certain occupations have both low rates of eligibility for paid sick days and high rates of employee turnover, leaving these workers much more vulnerable in the event of sudden illness or injury. Many of these are low wage workers who can least afford to take off a day without pay or spend any time unemployed.

The requirements of this legislation are modest: one hour of paid sick leave for each forty hours worked by an employee up to a maximum of forty hours per calendar year. The law would only apply to businesses with 50 or more employees; these are not small mom and pop shops struggling to survive.

The proposal is not unreasonably burdensome on businesses and it will keep our citizens healthier and their lives more stable. Thank you for hearing this important issue.