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Testimony for Taulant Proko
Labor and Public Employee Committee on the topic of ~~SB913~~ paid sick days

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this topic. I am glad to share my experiences regarding paid sick days. I hope this will help to expand the debate.

I am in favor of any measure that would make paid sick time mandatory for businesses. The impact on my family due to a lack of paid sick time has been damaging. I worked the past three and a half years at a factory with no paid sick time. If an employee at the factory gets sick they still have to show up to work. Management expects it. I have a wife and child so it would be an obstacle to lose a days pay when I was sick as well. I have personally shown up to work sick with a bad fever. I have gone in with the flu. There was even a time when I needed dental care because of bad tooth pain but instead of being able to get the care I needed I was stuck at work. I could not take the time off.

My father has worked at the same factory for seven years. He has had similar experiences to those listed above. There was a time that he was so sick he lost his voice and still had to show up for his shift. At sixty-seven my father should not be required to work when he's so ill, especially when he gets so sick that he loses his voice.

There are many more stories like this at the factory since no one receives paid sick time. Because no one can stay home, sickness spreads throughout the factory as soon as one person comes in ill. I could tell that I would be sick soon because it would be "going around."

Management at the factory does not care about the state of an employee's health. Their only concern is filling all the shifts at the factory. It is hard to work for an employer who cares so little about its employees but when you have a family and bills you have to work. Not only is the situation disheartening, it is also dangerous. In a factory setting there is enough that can go wrong without having to worry about a sick employee making a mistake because they are drowsy with a fever. He has had many accidents where he stapled his fingers because he was so fatigued and couldn't concentrate on the staple gun.

I have found a new job but my father still works there. I worry for him. I think it is unjust to work in those conditions. I know a lot of people that don't get paid for sick days, especially people that just moved to USA and don't know anything about what they should expect. So I take this opportunity to speak out even for those who can't speak for themselves (like my father), because of language barriers. I'm sure the ones that have the privilege of paid sick days, don't think about the ones that don't have it. I believe it is essential for the sake of our health that something needs to be changed, and it will not start from the factory, I can tell you that much.

Sincerely,
Taulant Proko
Rocky Hill