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**Testimony of the CT Chapter of the National Organization for Women (CT NOW)
Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee
March 1, 2011**

In Support of SB 913 Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Days to Employees

The CT Chapter of the National Organization for Women (CT NOW) strongly supports SB 913 Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Days to Employees. Throughout their lives women generally remain the primary caregivers for their families. Additionally, 71 percent of mothers with children under the age of 18 are in the workforce. In dual-earning families, women contribute an average of 44 percent of their family's income. Therefore, if a woman lacks paid sick leave she will be jeopardizing not only her own health and that of her loved ones but also her family's economic well-being.

It is imperative that women have paid sick time throughout their entire working careers. Young women who are starting families need time off to get appropriate medical care. Normal pregnancies require twelve or more visits to the doctor. By the end of the pregnancy, most women will have to see the doctor once a week if not more. Without paid sick days, it would be nearly impossible for a woman to get the care that is so critical for her and her developing child.

As families grow, the need for paid sick time only increases as women often need time off to care for their children when they get sick. Currently, most women work outside of the home, making this provision absolutely critical. Working mothers should not be put in the position of choosing between caring for their child and losing pay or going to work and sending a sick child to school or daycare.

As the baby boomer generation ages, paid sick time will become absolutely essential for the economic stability of working families. Research indicates that the "sandwich generation," those who care for both a minor and an aging parent, is growing. In this scenario, paid sick time becomes a crucial element in balancing both work and family obligations.

CT NOW strongly supports legislation aimed at providing employees with paid sick days. It is clear that a lack of paid sick days disproportionately harms women. The time has come to pass this reform and send the message to women that not only are their contributions in the workplace valued, but so are their contributions to their families.

Thank you.