

913

*Testimony from Shontay Watts  
New Haven, CT  
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*Committee on Labor and Public Employees in support of Senate Bill 913 for Paid Sick Days.*

I am in support of the paid sick days legislation. This is an issue that affects many throughout the state who do not receive paid sick leave. This includes myself. Last year I had two part time jobs, both in the food service industry, which did not give me any paid sick days at all.

An unfortunate aspect of not having paid sick days is that I cannot take care of my children when they are sick. However, I am one of few people lucky enough to have a very supportive family who helps me take care of my children. I don't know what I would do without them.

Last year one of my co-workers took time off because he caught the flu at work. My boss cut his hours and now doesn't have as many hours as he did before because he took time off from work to recover from his illness. Our boss felt the need to reprimand him for taking the time off. Instances like this make me afraid of taking time off from work when I am sick. I never missed work because I worried about losing my jobs. I couldn't even take my daughter to the emergency room without fearing that my bosses will cut my hours.

Not only does not having paid sick days prevent me from taking care of my children when they are sick but also it makes it hard for me to schedule regular appointments with the doctor for them. Fortunately, my sister or mother is able to make their appointments and take them to their appointments.

In one instance a couple years ago, I had to go to work with pneumonia. I was so sick that I went to the emergency room right when my shift ended at 12:30 am and although I was advised to stay home and rest, I had to go to work sick because I couldn't afford to lose pay. Not only did I have to come in contact with many customers whom I could have gotten sick but it also affected my job performance. For example, at my job I had to put the cash for the day in a slot, however since I was so sick I accidentally threw it in the trashcan. Luckily, the trash had not been collected, so my manager was able to go into the dumpster to collect the money. The company could have lost more money from me coming to work sick than if they had just paid me to stay at home and get better. It would have been better for both me and for my employer to give me a paid sick day, because I would have been more productive and wouldn't have run the risk of getting customers sick which could have resulted in a lawsuit.

The paid sick days legislation is important to every worker and business throughout the state of Connecticut and it is my hope that we will see this through for the hundreds of thousands that need paid sick leave.