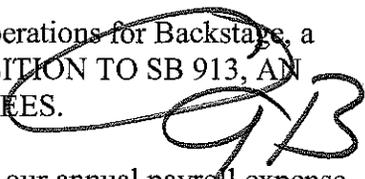


My name is Robert DeZinno. I am a resident of Middlebury, CT, and Director of Operations for Backstage, a restaurant which opened in Torrington on January 24, 2011. I am writing IN OPPOSITION TO SB 913, AN ACT MANDATING EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES. 

Backstage has created 61 good jobs for Northwest Connecticut residents. We expect our annual payroll expense to exceed \$800,000. Our servers and bartenders will earn an additional \$300,000 to \$400,000 in tips paid directly to them by our customers.

SB 913 further takes Connecticut down the path as America's least business-friendly state. No other state mandates this "benefit," putting government between an employer and his/her employees in the negotiation of employee benefits.

- Calling Paid Sick Leave a benefit is pure subterfuge. Mandated Paid Sick Leave is no more than a legislated entitlement, to be first enacted in a state that is currently struggling to find the dollars required to honor its promises to its own employees. Easily enough, the expense of state payroll is borne by others than those who have created the largess of state employment.
- Restaurant owners are small businesspeople working uniquely long hours to provide for their own families. The expense of paid sick leave, like all operating expenses, must be born by them. Customers look for value when they patronize any business, and they do not calculate the hidden expenses of operating a business in Connecticut when looking at menu prices.
- In order to pay an employee to stay home, the restaurant owner must reduce the amount of his/her own earnings. The restaurant owner has worked hard pursuing the American dream, only to be punished by statute.
- Unlike most businesses, a restaurant must be staffed fully to provide proper customer service. When employees call out sick they must be replaced. Paid sick leave actually doubles the payroll expense for that position on that day.
- This is not a "public health issue," as it has been labeled by some. It is not about employees being forced to work while sick. It is more about Connecticut's labor mentality of "more, more, more." Reported in Bloomberg Business Week, December, 2010: The number of workers who have falsely called in sick has jumped almost 20 percent since 2008, according to workforce productivity company Kronos, and now 57 percent of U.S. salaried workers play hooky.
- Recently, Wisconsin teachers, angry about the possibility that they might need to "share sacrifice" with taxpayers, called out "sick" in such numbers that the state's school system was forced to close. I cannot find any information to support this thought: How many Connecticut state employees used paid "sick" time to attend the recent rally in support of Wisconsin state employees? If the number is one or greater, the action was an insult to Connecticut taxpayers. If the number is zero, I offer all in attendance that day an apology.
- Since opening our restaurant one month ago, we have experienced no fewer than 2 dozen occurrences of employees switching shifts or asking for time off for non-illness reasons. The employees involved were more than willing to forego the day's pay to attend to their personal needs.
- Wise employees know to put just a few dollars away each week to get through a few lost days of pay due to a real illness. These employees are happy to have good jobs, and understand that continued employment for everyone would be jeopardized by a state mandate requiring employers to pay people when they DO NOT come to work.
- Enactment of SB 913 will cost 12 good people their new jobs. We will be forced to operate our restaurant with less than 50 employees so that we will not be forced to comply with this onerous entitlement.