

9/13

My name is Brian Anderson. I am a legislative and political representative for Council 4 AFSCME, a union of 35,000 Connecticut public and private employee members.

Council 4 supports SB 913, AA Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave To Employees. The respected Institute for Women's Policy Research estimates that only 60% of Connecticut's workers have sick leave. That means that over 655 thousand workers in our state do not. Institute research shows that granting sick days economically benefits workers, employers and our society in the long run.

Economic benefits aside, this is a common sense public safety bill. When workers report to work sick, there is a good chance that they may spread the sickness. This makes even more workers sick and risks spreading the illness to even more people. This is a particular problem when these workers are in service industry jobs such as working at a restaurant, hotel or retail establishment. A sick worker could unwittingly and unintentionally spread the flu or other ailment to the very customers that they serve. Unfortunately, it is workers in just such jobs that often are not given paid sick days off by their employers. **We submit a fact sheet from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services concerning the deadly avian flu. It says "The Centers for Disease Control ... and other leading public health experts agree that it is not a question of IF a pandemic will occur, but WHEN it will occur."** It goes on to say in comparing an avian flu outbreak to the 1918-1919 flu pandemic that "if a pandemic of similar severity occurred today,... two million Americans could die." This bill will safeguard the public.

Council 4 also urges you to pass:

SB 6428, AAC State Financial Assistance and Employers that Have Transferred Jobs Out of the State

This bill states that a corporation that receives state financial aid, and then transfers work out of state or lays off workers during the period that they are receiving state financial aid must pay the state back along with a 5% penalty. This is common sense in its most basic form.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.