

913

Testimony from Elizabeth Maloney
In SUPPORT of Paid Sick Days - SB 913

Dear Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski and members of the Labor Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my story.

I work in food service, as a waitress at a large chain restaurant in Enfield, Connecticut. I've been working there for 19 years.

The official store policy is that if you get sick, you call out and don't go to work. But we don't get paid when we stay home to recover, so in reality, it doesn't quite work that way. Waiters and waitresses aren't exactly millionaires. It's tough enough to make ends meet with a full week's pay check, especially in times like these. It's no surprise that when my coworkers get sick, more often than not, they come in to work all the same.

One coworker recently came to work with a "24 hour stomach bug" instead of staying home. Before long, I myself had caught the bug, as had several other employees -- with symptoms including vomiting and diarrhea. The illness was an extremely unpleasant one. Not a pretty picture. But the truth is, most of my coworkers returned to work before they should have.

If some of the workers got sick, there's no doubt this illness could have been spread to customers as well. But without paid sick days, employees just simply don't have the ability to stay home from work. Think about that next time you go out to eat. From fast food to fine dining, this is the truth in most restaurants across Connecticut.

Most employees are afraid to speak up about this policy because they fear losing their jobs. I'm testifying to speak up for all of my coworkers who've had to come in to work sick, and for the thousands of restaurant-goers who've unfairly gotten sick from a worker who couldn't stay home to recover.

Do the right thing for our health and for your health. Please pass paid sick days legislation right away.

Thank you.