



**Independent Electrical Contractors
of New England, Inc.**

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**TESTIMONY OF
LISA STEVENS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
INDEPENDENT ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS OF NEW ENGLAND
BEFORE THE
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
MARCH 1, 2011**

As a trade association that represents many small employers, IEC oppose SB-913 which mandates the personnel policies of private employers.

Sick leave policies vary from company to company because each company has different needs, different costs, and different obligations to its customers. For example, contractors that bid on construction projects may be hard pressed to cover mandated sick leave costs and complete projects on time and at the agreed upon price.

SB-913 not only mandates that employers provide paid sick leave, it also details how the leave may be used. For example, the bill requires employers to allow employees to take leave in hourly increments. Requiring employers to track leave in hourly increments is cumbersome, particularly when workers are leaving from various job sites. It may require some companies to spend resources to purchase different payroll software or change payroll vendors in order to track this time.

Although many of our employers have fewer than 50 employees, we are concerned about the impact of the bill on the state's overall economy. Connecticut is facing a very difficult economic recovery and has already lost more than 100,000 jobs. This has directly impacted our industry because it has slowed new construction and housing renovations and remodeling.

We need to enact policies that encourage job growth and send a signal to our employers that Connecticut is truly "open for business". If this bill passes, Connecticut will be the first state in the country to dictate when and how an employer must provide its employees with paid medical leave. This is the wrong time and the wrong signal to send to our business community.

The state is facing a multi-billion dollar budget deficit. To address this, there are \$1.5 billion in new taxes on the table as well as measures that would allow towns to increase taxes. All of these tax increases will directly and significantly increase the cost of doing business in Connecticut. How can Connecticut, in good conscience and in good faith, add another employer mandate on top of all of those tax increases and expect Connecticut to be "open for business"?

When faced with increased personnel costs and inflexible government mandates, many companies may simply decide to stay small rather than expand and add jobs to our economy. This has a stifling effect on entrepreneurship, which is absolutely critical to maintaining a healthy economy.

We urge you to **oppose SB-913** and, instead, consider raising bills that will help address the skyrocketing costs faced by our employer community.

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