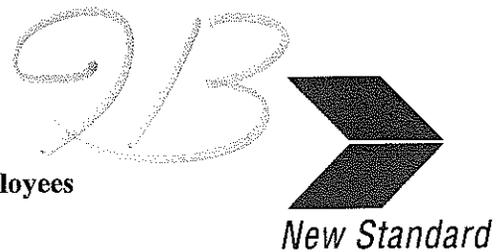


Paid Sick Leave Testimony – March 1, 2011
Submitted to the Labor and Public Employees Committee
of the Connecticut General Assembly regarding
S.B. 913, An Act Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees



Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski, Senator Gomes, Representative Santiago, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Tessa Marquis. Thank you for the opportunity to address your committee with testimony regarding my experience running a business in the State of Connecticut. Prior to that, I lived and worked in New York City.

My company, New Standard Institute, is based in Milford. Over the past 20⁺plus years I have employed over 80 people through my company, many of them as first-time job holders.

People spend about ¼ of their time at work, but it is their employment that sets the mood for their lives. The conditions people work under effect their attitude as they move on to other jobs and careers. Therefore, it has always been my intention to follow the creed “do unto others” – whether it is when setting up the hours we work, the light and space we work within, the healthcare and education benefits we offer, or many more less definable aspects of a workday requiring the highest level of attention, intelligence, and skill from all the employees.

When you take on the responsibility of other people’s livelihood, the responsibility for their personal lives needs to be approached with care, flexibility, and a view towards privacy.

In 1995, while sitting by my father’s deathbed in intensive care I realized that this sort of time off for a family member could cause enormous additional stress on an employee. I envisioned the effect of having to choose between the paycheck and the personal, and being forced by an employer to select the paycheck. I immediately instituted a 5 day emergency leave policy for staff, five days employees could use to take care of themselves or family members, seek medical attention, or deal with an emergency. I also allow employees to use those days for any serious family stress, so that family funerals and care of grandparents and other close relatives are included.

Eventually, this became a paid sick days and beyond policy, so that vacation time, holidays, and sick days can be used or “swapped out” as needed.

Last year I provided testimony before this committee regarding my experiences with the need for time off for preventive medical care, mental health support, and various other needs that arise at any company. I have attached that statement to your printed testimony and will only repeat one section:

At our company you are not penalized financially for time out when ill, and we find people return to work sooner and ready to work when given proper care.

On behalf of the working people of Connecticut, in particular the mothers and caregivers, I urge you to pass this bill.

Thank you.

Tessa Marquis

New Standard Institute, Inc.