



**Written Testimony of
Glenn Marshall, Commissioner
Department of Labor
Labor and Public Employees Committee
March 1, 2012**

Good Afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with written testimony in order to raise some fiscal concerns for the Department of Labor regarding **Senate Bill #150 AAC Family and Medical Leave Benefits for Certain Municipal Employees.**

The proposed bill amends C.G.S. § 31-51rr, which was originally passed in 2007 to provide family and medical leave rights, as are provided by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"), to municipal employees who are parties to a civil union. This bill makes an appropriate technical change by removing the obsolete term of "civil union" and replaces it with same sex marriage.

The proposed bill extends family and medical leave rights to paraprofessionals who have been employed for at least 12 months by an employer and have worked 950 hours in the year immediately preceding the leave. Because the Connecticut FMLA statute specifically excludes municipalities from coverage, and the federal FMLA only applies to employees who have worked 1,250 hours in the year immediately preceding the leave, the bill would seek to provide an FMLA type of right to the thousands of paraprofessionals that are presently ineligible for FMLA leave.

Therefore, there will be a fiscal impact to this Department because SB #150 opens up the population of potential complainants to the approximately 25,000 paraprofessionals who will be entitled to a federal FMLA type of leave. With the training involved and the potential of many complaints, the Department will need additional staff, which may include an attorney and an investigator. Staff will need to understand each provision of the federal FMLA. Up until now, the Department interpreted and enforced only the Connecticut FMLA. If SB #150 were to pass, the Department will be responsible for enforcing the provisions of the federal FMLA as well.

In addition, because this bill will not be effective until the regulations have been adopted, the law would not even protect any of the paraprofessionals the bill seeks to add to the FMLA. Upon the effective date of the regulations, those paraprofessionals will still need to work an additional 950 hours in order to receive the benefits of the law. The regulatory process can take anywhere from 6 months to a year or longer to complete.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please feel free to contact me or my staff if you need additional information.