



Connecticut
Early Childhood
Alliance

**Testimony before the Labor and Public Employees Committee
Raised Bill 6553 – An Act Establishing a Task Force to
Study Family Medical Leave Insurance
Submitted by Maggie Adair, Executive Director
Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance
Tuesday, March 12, 2013**

The Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance thanks the Labor and Public Employee Committee for the opportunity to testify. I am Maggie Adair, Executive Director of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance. The Alliance is a statewide advocacy and membership organization committed to improving outcomes for all children, birth to age eight, in the areas of early learning, health, safety, and economic security.

The Alliance supports **Raised Bill 6553 – An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Family Medical Leave Insurance**. This bill H.B. 6553 will require that a Task Force be created by July 31, 2013 to study the merits and implications of establishing Family Medical Leave Insurance in Connecticut.

Connecticut has a history establishing policies that support families. In 1990, three years before the Federal Government passed the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Connecticut passed a state FMLA. FMLA offers 12-16 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave, which workers can use to recover from an illness, to care for a new baby, or to care for a sick family member.

However, it is estimated that only half of all workers nationally are both covered and eligible for FMLA due to criteria related to employer staffing size and number of hours worked. And for those workers who are eligible, unpaid leave is often unaffordable.

At some point in a lifetime, nearly everyone needs time away from work to recover from a serious illness or care for a sick loved one or new child. Since 1990, the Connecticut Department of Labor has reported on the use of FMLA in Connecticut. Each year, overwhelmingly, the majority of leave is taken to care for one's own illness.

There are other critical factors why Family Medical Leave Insurance would be a great support for working families including family caregivers providing support for parents and aging relatives and parents taking leave to take care of a new born. It also is critical to help people to stay in the work force during a challenging time in life, which in turn, is good for business.

The Alliance urges the Committee to support H.B. 6553. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

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