



**Written Testimony of Debra L. Ness
President, National Partnership for Women & Families
on H.B. 5269, An Act Creating Parity between Paid Sick Leave Benefits and
Other Employer-Provided Benefits**

**Submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly Joint Committee on Commerce
February 27, 2014**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in opposition to H.B. 5269**. The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care and policies that help women and men in the United States meet the dual demands of work and family. We are proud to work with public officials and community groups across the nation to provide public education about the need for common sense policies such as paid sick days.

Connecticut led the country with the adoption of the first statewide paid sick days law in 2011. This groundbreaking public policy guaranteed approximately 287,000 private sector workers the right to earn paid sick days.¹ Since the implementation of the law on January 1, 2012, workers covered by the law have been better able to care for themselves, their children and their spouses without jeopardizing a day's pay or their jobs.

In the two years since the law's implementation, the number of jobs in Connecticut has grown across industries, including in the leisure and hospitality industry, which was among the most affected by the law's requirements.² Employers who testified to the legislature in 2011 that they would be forced to close their doors or lay off workers if the law was enacted were hiring for new positions and advertising new establishments in 2013.³

Connecticut's paid sick days law has broad support from both workers and employers. A statewide survey conducted shortly after passage found that nearly three-quarters of voters favored the state's adoption of the law.⁴ A study conducted late last year found that more than three-quarters of *employers* expressed support for the law. Employers surveyed reported that the law had a minimal impact on costs, and few employers said they made adjustments such as increasing prices or reducing employee hours because of the law. In addition, some employers identified positive effects of paid sick days, including improved employee productivity and morale.⁵

Like Connecticut, other jurisdictions that have adopted paid sick days policies have experienced significant positive effects. In San Francisco, home to the country's first paid sick days standard, the number of businesses and jobs in the city grew relative to business and job growth in surrounding counties after the paid sick days law was implemented, including in the retail and food service industries.⁶ Three years after implementation, two-thirds of businesses said they support the law,⁷ and the Vice President of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, the organization that led the fight against the law with dire

of Columbia recently strengthened and expanded its law to cover a greater number of workers, and New York City is in the process of doing the same.

For these reasons, we strongly urge the committee to reject H.B. 5269. Given the success of the state's groundbreaking paid sick days law in protecting workers, and the fact that the impact on employers has been positive or neutral, there is no reason to weaken the law and force more workers to choose between their paychecks or jobs and their health or their families' health. Rather, the committee should follow nationwide trends and consider proposals to strengthen the law, as other jurisdictions have done, to bring more workers within the law's protection.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

¹ Williams, C. (2014, January 7). Personal communication.