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Testimony in Opposition to HB 5269
An Act Creating Parity Between Paid Sick Leave Benefits and
Other Employer-Provided Benefits
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To Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, Senator Crisco, Representative Becker, Senator Frantz and Representative Lavielle, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill today.

My name is Ellen Bravo and I am the director of the Family Values @ Work Consortium. Family Values @ Work is a national network of 21 state and local coalitions helping to spur the growing movement for family-friendly workplace policies such as paid sick days and family leave insurance.

Our coalitions represent a diverse, nonpartisan group of more than 1,000 grassroots organizations, ranging from restaurant owners to restaurant workers, faith leaders to public health professionals, think tanks to activists for children, seniors and those with disabilities. In addition to Connecticut, Family Values @ Work coalitions are active in California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, Washington, D.C., and Wisconsin.

The FV@W Consortium was proud to support the passage of Connecticut's paid sick days law in 2011, and we commend this legislature for having taken action on such a crucial issue.

We cannot support HB 5269 in its current form. Paid sick time is a necessity for many workers in this economy – families who are trying to juggle work and personal responsibilities, and still make ends meet. We have several concerns about the current bill:

- By changing the reporting period to just one week of the year, this bill would make it easy for employers to “downsize” for that short time to skirt the law, and then rehire their employees back to full size afterwards.
- The expansion of the manufacturing loophole will further exclude service workers. This means that service employees at manufacturing firms would be carved out, leaving food service, janitorial staff, retail staff and other low-wage service workers without this vital protection.

Connecticut's paid sick days law has been a success. Recent analysis has shown that the law has been helpful for workers, at a minimal impact to employers and with no harm to employment



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in the relevant sectors. This evidence confirms similar findings in San Francisco and Seattle. And since Connecticut's law passed almost three years ago, paid sick days standards have been passed in Seattle, Portland, New York City, Jersey City, Newark and expanded in Washington D.C.

Connecticut should look at these other laws as a model for strengthening its own. Seattle's ordinance covers all employees regardless of business size, and New York City's will soon cover employers with 5 or more employees, guaranteeing job-protected sick days for those in the very smallest firms. None of the laws in other locations narrow the requirement to only service occupations. New York had originally excluded manufacturing but is about to add coverage to that sector in an expanded version of the law expected to pass soon.

The bill's title claims to establish parity between this bill and other employer-provided benefits. The parity we should look to is that established by the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which affirms that women's pay cannot be made equal by lowering that of men. We should look not to the lowest common denominator, but one that will lift all of us – workers and their families, employers' viability through lower turnover and increased productivity and sales, and the state's economy. Employees are also consumers. Losing income or a job because of being a good parent or following doctor's orders hurts family economic stability and diminishes all of us.

We encourage this committee to reject HB 5269 and instead pass a policy that will expand benefits to additional hard-working men and women, instead of diminishing the access to paid sick time for those who already have protection under the law.



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