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Labor and Public Employees Committee  
February 27, 2014  
Testimony in Support of House Bill #5283  
**AN ACT CONCERNING EXPANSION OF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**  
Submitted by Nora Duncan, State Director

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of more than 37 million, 603,000 of whom live right here in Connecticut. Our mission includes helping people age 50 and up turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthening communities and fighting for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, aging in place, caregiving, employment security and financial security.

AARP CT supports House Bill #5283, AN ACT CONCERNING EXPANSION OF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE, and of efforts at both the state and federal level that increase paid leave and cover more workers for longer periods of time so that employees can both attend to their own health needs and care for loved ones. This bill expands the family members covered by the law so that an employee may use Family and Medical Leave to care for a parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent or grandchild.

The definition of family, in the minds of most people, certainly includes parent-in-laws, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren. These are the people we care for when they are sick, support so they can age in place and provide for when they face a medical crisis. The law of our state should match the positive realities of our society and encourage family members to care for one another.

AARP's efforts on behalf of family caregivers is extensive: supporting legal and system reforms; programs and services; and an array of trusted free supports and resources on our website. Some examples of our local CT work include: my appointment to the Family Medical Leave Insurance Taskforce which will report our recommendations this fall; a conference for unpaid family caregivers in June; and advocacy for respite programs.

Any argument that the expansion of the law is bad for business or the economy is tempered by the facts. Support of the family caregiver has a trickle-down effect that is good for our economy and our society. The 711,000 family caregivers in Connecticut gave 465 million hours of free home care worth \$5.8 billion in 2009. While AARP works to update our statistics, it seems safe to assume that the numbers have increased with an aging population and more costly healthcare system. When family caregivers are supported, they are better able to provide free care, reducing the incidences and costs of hospitalizations and institutional care, something the business community, advocates and families all agree makes for good common sense policy.

I encourage you to support this bill and to be as inclusive as possible in our approach to caregiving and Family and Medical Leave policies in Connecticut. Thank you for your time and support.

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