

Testimony of Eric W. Gjede  
Assistant Counsel, CBIA  
Before the Committee on Labor and Public Employees  
Hartford, CT  
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**Testifying in opposition to HB 5283 AAC Expansion of Family and Medical Leave**

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

CBIA is opposed to HB 5283.

A number of surveys released in the past year consistently ranked Connecticut as one of the highest cost and least business-friendly states. While this state has many virtues, the belief that Connecticut is a bad place to do business has spread across the nation. Businesses pay attention to these surveys, and many make the choice to locate or grow their business elsewhere. This negative perception denies our citizens many job opportunities that could have helped advance their careers.

One of the chief complaints about Connecticut as a place to do business is that the legislative and regulatory mandates passed by our state are frequently more burdensome than those of our neighboring states or required under federal law. For example, Connecticut's FMLA provisions are significantly more expansive than the federal FMLA law. Creating a greater divide between state and federal labor laws will only increase compliance costs for Connecticut businesses, many of which are still struggling in this post-recession economy.

Despite proponents' claims, the FMLA benefit is not "free" for employers. When employees are out on FMLA, employers are required to hold the position, have to hire temporary replacement workers, and continue to provide benefits to the absent worker. While not "free", businesses agree that the protections in federal FMLA law are better businesses in other states are on the same level playing field. However, each addition we make to the Connecticut FMLA law makes doing business in this state more expensive.

For this reason, the business community encourages you to take no further action on HB 5283.