



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Member Organizations

The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Family Justice
Bridgeport, CT

Women's Center
Danbury, CT

Domestic Violence Program United Services
Dayville, CT

Network Against Domestic Abuse
Enfield, CT

Domestic Abuse Services Greenwich YWCA
Greenwich, CT

Referral House
Hartford, CT

Meriden Wallingford Cheyenne
Meriden, CT

New Britain
Middletown, CT

United - Connecticut Council
New Britain, CT

The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services
New Haven, CT

Safe Futures
New London, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Norwalk, CT

Women's Support Services
Sharon, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Stamford, CT

Susan B. Anthony Project
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

Domestic Violence Program United Services
Willimantic, CT

Testimony in Support of

HB 6932, AA Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave.

**Committee on Labor and Public Employees
March 5, 2015**

Good afternoon Representative Tercyak, Senator Winfield, and members of the committee. I am a graduate student interning at CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), which is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those agencies that serve them. Our members provide essential services to nearly 50,000 victims of domestic violence each year. Services provided include 24-hour crisis response, emergency shelter, safety planning, counseling, support groups and court advocacy.

We urge your support of HB 6932.

CCADV is a member of the CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave, a group of diverse advocates who represent the needs of working families that have come together to explore how Connecticut can provide relief when an employee needs to take time to deal with illness or to care for a newborn. We support this effort to establish a paid family and medical leave system in the state.

Despite research showing that the benefits of a paid family leave system include a stronger work force, positive changes in wages, and lower use of public assistance, the U.S. is one of few developed countries without such a system. Although the FMLA requires that companies with more than 50 employees provide unpaid leave to eligible employees, most (78%) of the workers who are eligible for this type of leave don't use it because they can't afford to lose pay. Of course, employers can currently choose to provide paid leave at a cost to themselves; only 16% of employers in Connecticut do so.

Connecticut does have explicit leave from employment for victims of family violence (CGS § 31-51ss). Under that statute, victims can take paid leave if it is offered by their employer and they have time accrued; if employers do not offer paid leave, they are required to allow victims 12 days of unpaid leave. However, this time may not be sufficient for an employee to address his or her own serious health condition resulting from domestic violence, or to care for a qualifying family member with a serious health condition that resulted from domestic violence. Allowing people to care for a family member who has experienced this can be a critical piece of stabilization for the victim. Having access to a form of paid leave would be beneficial to many victims of domestic violence across the state. We support the changes proposed by the CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave, such as removing the application process and some of the eligibility requirements proposed in the bill.

Connecticut is a leader on family-friendly workplace policies, which in turn attract quality workers to the state. We urge your support of this measure and the protections that it will provide to working Connecticut families.

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For questions, please contact Liza Andrews, Director of Public Policy & Communications, at 860.282.7899 or landrews@ctcadv.org