

Thank you Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 6932 AN ACT CONCERNING PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE.

My name is Christian Miron and I'm the Executive Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut. I'm testifying in support of HB 6932, An Act Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave. NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut's mission is to develop and sustain a constituency that uses the political process to guarantee every woman the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including bearing healthy children.

Paid leave simply makes sense in public health terms. Workers need to be able to take care of themselves or their family in times of illness, as well as have adequate time to care for and bond with a newborn child. To know that there are people whose health is suffering because their family would have to go into debt to provide them the support and care they need is tragic. At one point or another, we will all rely on someone else for care, and it's time for workplace policies to recognize and accommodate this basic human need.

Paid leave is also an issue of women's rights. While everyone stands to benefit from this legislation, women suffer the most from a lack of paid leave. Nearly 7 in 10 caregivers have to make work-related accommodations in order to fulfill their care giving responsibilities, such as taking time off, reducing hours, or even leaving work entirely. Since women are disproportionately likely to be caregivers they are especially vulnerable to a loss of economic security or career advancement as a result of the invaluable care they provide their families.

Women are also disadvantaged by a lack of paid family leave when they start their families. Paid leave would improve the health of both mothers and their babies. Women who can postpone returning to work after having a child experience fewer depressive symptoms. Being able to take leave reduces child mortality and increases the likelihood that babies will be up to date on their immunizations and check-ups. Additionally, paid leave will give new moms economic security and job protection. From the wage gap to the glass ceiling, women already face numerous struggles in the workplace - having a family shouldn't be one of them.

Connecticut has an opportunity here to truly support family values by offering paid family leave. By giving workers and their families the ability to care for their health or a newborn child without worrying about losing their income, paid leave will lead to healthier and happier families. Instituting paid leave will also recognize the invaluable work of caregivers and lessen the burden that women often face as their family's main caregiver. Finally, it will allow working women to start families without suffering financially and in their careers. Everyone benefits from paid family leave.

Thank you for your consideration.