



**Testimony of Win Heimer, Executive Vice President  
Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans**

**Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly  
March 5, 2015**

**In support of HB 6784 and HB6932.**

Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak and members of the committee:

Thank you for giving me this opportunity...

My name is Win Heimer. I am a resident of West Hartford and the executive vice president of the Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans. The Alliance is the state affiliate of the national Alliance for Retired Americans and comprises 50,000 members in Connecticut.

We urge your support for HB 6784 and HB6932. As you know, HB 6784 expands Connecticut's groundbreaking paid sick days program to workers who are not currently covered while HB6932 establishes a paid family and medical leave program.

As has been noted by others, our economy isn't working for too many people. And staying home to care for a loved one isn't made any easier if a worker loses a day's pay. These measures will allow workers to balance caring for their families and their jobs.

We are particularly pleased that these proposals will expand the definition of "family member" to include a parent or grandparent. Our Alliance members are among Connecticut's over-65 population that numbers over a half million. And the population of Connecticut's older adults out-paces increases of the state's total population. They need assurance that there can always be someone in the family to care for them should the need arise.

The Working Families Party puts it well: "Americans work more hours, and have less time off, than people in any other advanced nation in the world. Despite those hours, many workers can't make ends meet at the end of the month. It is a situation that throws families into a crisis. Workers are faced with an impossible choice when they can't afford to take time off, but a child gets sick, or a family member needs long-term care."

Having paid time off to take care of any family member is good public policy. It's what other advanced countries do. It's the right thing to do. And long-term care is an issue that particularly hits home for Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans members.

For the sake of our elders, our children and our grandchildren, we urge passage of HB6784 and HB6932.