



March 5, 2014

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 6784 and HB 6932.

To the distinguished members of the Labor Committee:

My name is Matt Arciuolo and I'm the owner of Arciuolo's Shoes and Footstar Orthotics in Milford, Connecticut. We're a small, family-owned business founded by my great grandfather in 1921. We specialize in comfortable, everyday footwear for men, women and kids. We have 6 employees, all of whom have worked here for over 6 years. We have very little, if any employee turnover and the people I work with are treated like family, because, well, they are family.

I believe that sickness shouldn't result in financial ruin. Just because someone is unfortunate enough to be injured on the job or fall ill, doesn't mean that they should be cast aside when they need help the most. Last year, one of our employees had to take six months off because of an injured disc in her back that required numerous surgical procedures and prevented her from working an 8 hour shift. Working in a shoe store doesn't seem physical, but you're constantly moving, getting up and down, standing and sitting. It got to a point where she wouldn't have been able to continue working. We made sure she knew that she'd be financially secure so she could focus on what really mattered, her health. It was a relief to her and her family to be able to take care of her needs without looming financial worry.

Last year, another employee missed a month because of double chest infection, and we compensated him for lost time. We never gave it a second thought. If somebody faces something difficult, an illness, or a tragedy, we do our best to take care of that person until they are back on their feet. Needless to say, because of this belief, employee morale is incredibly high.

We don't have a maximum on paid sick days or paid family and medical leave. Paid sick days and family and medical leave is just considered a business expenditure, and it seems like a liability on paper, but the benefits are numerous and invaluable. Guaranteed paid sick

days and family and medical leave develop company loyalty, and the result is a friendly, knowledgeable staff who cares about the business as much as you do. Putting that aside though, it's simply the right thing to do. If you fell ill, the last thing you'd want to worry about is your finances. My family wouldn't hesitate to take care of me, so we don't hesitate to help our Arciuolo's family.

I urge you to pass HB 6784 and HB 6932.