

March 5, 2015

Testimony in support of HB 6784 An Act Expanding Paid Sick Leave.

My name is Bianca Garnett. I am a Waterbury resident and I currently work at a dog grooming business.

Before my current position, I worked as a server at Silver City Sports Bar and Grill, the restaurant in the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Meriden, Connecticut, and I lost my job because the 680-hour requirement for coverage under the current Paid Sick Days legislation did not apply to me at the time I became ill.

I worked for Silver City when I became acutely ill with the flu. To have me working in the restaurant would have been dangerous and I would have offended and possibly infected every customer and employee in the restaurant.

I followed the proper protocol and called the restaurant and informed them I would not be working that day as I was very sick.

I went to work on my next scheduled day and was sent home and told to come back two days later. No one explained why I was being sent home.

When I returned two days later I was fired for being sick. There was no question I had followed the correct procedures yet I was still terminated for no other reason than a virus happened to enter my body.

I would have needed to work more than 500 additional hours in order to be covered by the current paid sick days legislation; it would have taken me months and months to qualify. By changing the amount of time an employee has to work in order to earn Paid Sick Days, many more women like me will not lose their jobs when they get sick. If I had been protected by Paid Sick Day legislation had included me, a worker who worked less than 680 hours, I don't think I would have lost my job. Even I had lost it, I would have had immediate recourse through the Department of Labor.

I have an eight year old daughter who depends on me and my partner to raise her. When I lost my job, I had no back up and no savings. If I had some leverage to prevent an employer from firing me just for being sick, I would have been able to shield my daughter from the reality that her mother lost her job through no fault of her own.

Please make these common-sense changes to the Paid Sick Days law so that workers like myself are not fired just for getting sick.