



**Petonito's Pastry Shop**  
190 Main St, East Haven, CT 06512

March 5, 2015

**Testimony IN FAVOR of HB 6784 An Act Expanding Paid Sick Leave**  
From Mark Petonito, Owner of Petonito's Pastry Shop

To Representative Tercyak, Senator Gomes and the other members of the Committee on Labor and Public Employees,

I write to you in support of HB 6784, AA Expanding Paid Sick Leave. My business has always provided paid sick days to our workforce and everyone else should too.

Let me tell you a little about my business. Petonito's Pastry Shop has been in business for over 60 years. I took the business over from my father some time ago, and we specialize in wedding cakes and other sweet treats. Since my father opened the bakery in 1954, we've baked over 25,000 wedding cakes. With the help of our great staff here, I know we'll be around to bake another 25,000.

We treat our employees decently because it is what they deserve and it helps our business thrive. No one here makes minimum wage. We have about a half dozen employees. The full-time folks get healthcare, and everybody gets paid sick time for illnesses or medical issues. Just yesterday one of my employees had to take the day off because it's winter, and that means it's cold season.

I'm writing today in support of legislation to guarantee paid sick days for workers in Connecticut. I understand the importance of making sure my employees have the time to recuperate from illness without having to suffer loss of income too, or risk hiding their illness and coming to work anyway. I do what I can for my employees. I've found that providing paid sick days is important to creating a work environment based on trust and respect. Every business owner knows that keeping valued employees is important to running a successful business. Especially in the food service industry, it just makes sense to make sure employees don't feel pressure to come to work when they're sick with infectious illness.

Providing paid sick days is not costly -- it helps me retain valuable employees, it protects the health of my customers, and it's just the right thing to do. Small businesses are right to feel worried about rising energy costs, healthcare costs, and property taxes. But paid sick days isn't a big expense. In fact, in many ways, providing paid sick days helps keep my business vibrant.

In 2011 I was proud to support the passage of the nation's first-ever statewide paid sick days standard. But at the time we did it only for large businesses with more than 50 employees. Since then the policy has become law in the State of Massachusetts, New York City, and almost 20 jurisdictions across the country. Businesses did not struggle because of it, the policy has been a success, and now it's time to protect more workers by lowering the business size. Please pass HB 6784.