



CONNECTICUT

TESTIMONY OF
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS (NFIB)
OPPOSING
HB-6932, AAC PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE
BEFORE THE
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
MARCH 5, 2015

A non-profit, non-partisan organization founded in 1943, NFIB is Connecticut's and the nation's leading small-business association. In Connecticut, NFIB represents thousands of members and their employees. NFIB membership is scattered across the state and ranges from sophisticated high technology enterprises to "Main Street" small businesses to single-person "Mom & Pop" shops that operate in traditional ways. NFIB's mission is "To promote and protect the right of its members to own, operate, and grow their businesses." On behalf of those small- and independent- job-providers in Connecticut, I offer the following comments:

NFIB/Connecticut has significant concerns with HB-6932, and urges rejection. While no doubt well-intentioned, vastly expanding eligibility for Connecticut's existing Family and Medical Leave provisions, which are already more generous than that of federal or other states' laws, is unnecessary and will no-doubt have unintended consequences and costs for employers, both in terms of staffing and productivity, among other issues. Dramatically expanding Connecticut's FMLA laws will create considerable burdens on impacted small businesses. Most small-business owners already provide a great amount of flexibility and generosity in allowing their employees to take time off for family or medical purposes. NFIB surveys have indicated that 96 percent of small-business owners provide flexible hours when personal situations arise, regardless of the firm's size. Government mandates take away small employers' and employees' freedom to negotiate the benefits package that best meets their mutual needs. Expanding FMLA coverage provisions and creating a new paid leave program for employees could drastically increase the amount of paperwork and money spent complying as well. Increasing the number of circumstances and employees covered by FMLA imposes a significant new mandate on small business, and also ignores the question of whether or not a small employer can actually afford to keep a position open until an employee returns from leave. It is a burden for most small-business owners to keep a job open for even the most valued employee, and larger businesses are better able to absorb the costs forced on a business by government mandates. Small businesses know what to expect and how to comply with Connecticut's existing FMLA laws and discourage changes that would expand the law as well as make Connecticut appear even more uncompetitive with other states. Finally, NFIB has concerns about the costs not only to employers but also to the state to implement and administer the employee paid leave provisions of the bill. Experiences in other states have shown that these types of programs are not only costly to all, but also underutilized. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and NFIB urges lawmakers to take no action on HB-6932.