

Testimony IN SUPPORT of:

**SB858 AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYEES WHO CUSTOMARILY AND
REGULARLY RECEIVE GRATUITIES AND THE MINIMUM FAIR WAGE**

HB6784 AN ACT EXPANDING PAID SICK LEAVE

HB6932 AN ACT CONCERNING PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

HB6933 AN ACT CONCERNING PREDICTABLE SCHEDULING FOR EMPLOYEES

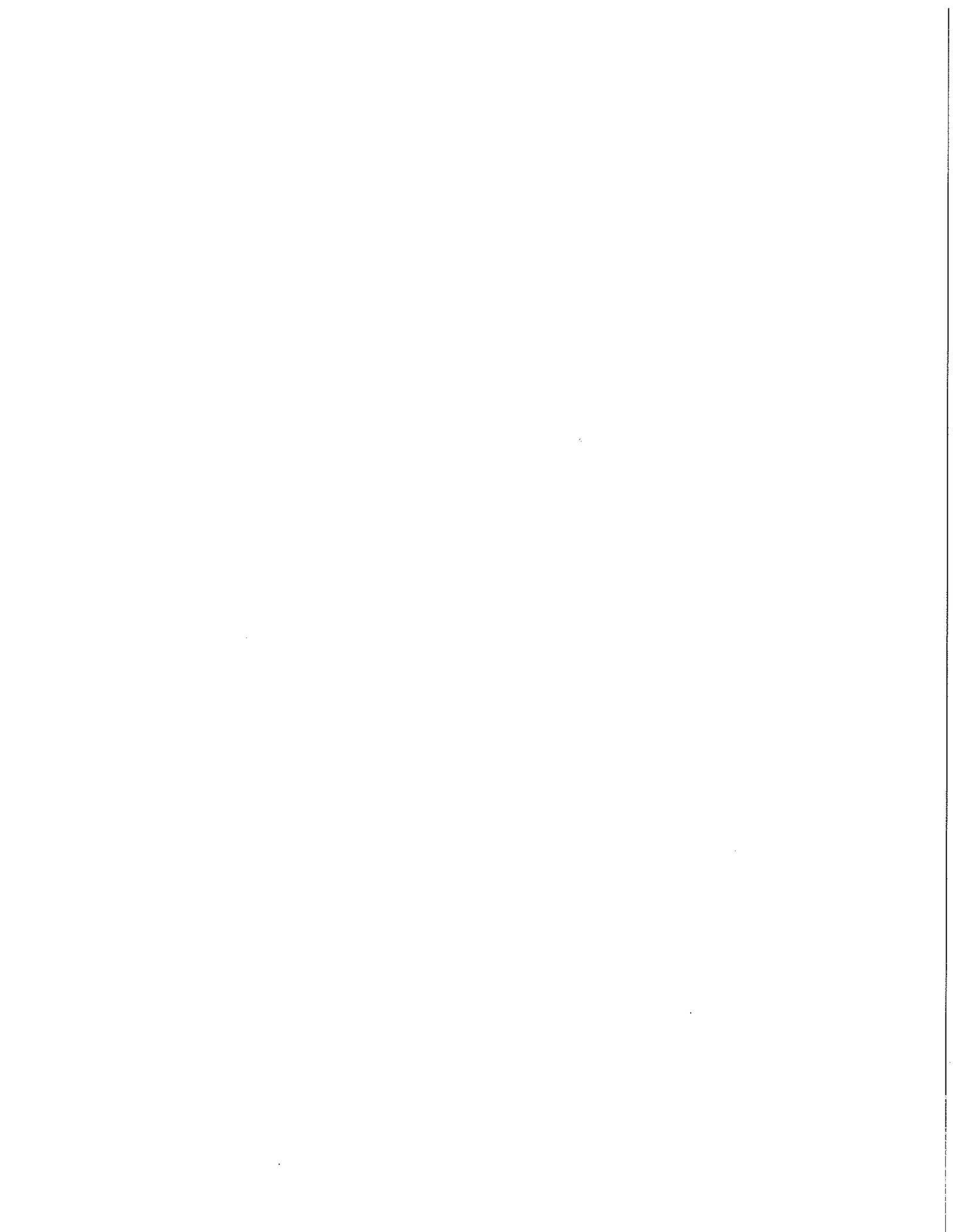
March 5, 2015

My name is Margot Dorfman and I am the CEO of the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce. I support the above legislation, which would improve economic security for hundreds of thousands of working women across Connecticut.

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce was founded to support the continued economic advancement of women. We are both a product as well as a part of the great Civil Rights Movement. The Women's Chamber has over 500,000 members – young and old, students and retirees, employees and business owners.

Despite some of the testimony I am sure you will hear today from corporate lobbying groups, these issues cannot be construed as a clear cut struggle between business owners and the labor force. We must recognize and appreciate that we have a 21st century workforce in which women have advanced in the workforce and in which families must value the often competing needs of work and family. Notwithstanding the progress women have made in the work force, we still endure many disadvantages including a 77¢ pay inequity gap, caregiving demands for children and an aging elderly population, and other trends which diminish our financial security.

Businesses owned and run by women recognize that when all employees are fairly compensated and unburdened by concerns about balancing caregiving and professional demands, that a business can thrive and capitalize on its motivated, committed employees; it is these very employees on which rely as consumers to purchase goods and services from local businesses. For these reasons and many more, I support the following legislation:



- **Paid Family and Medical Leave:** this policy ensures that men and women can afford to take the time they need to care for themselves or their families when someone becomes very sick or after the arrival of a child into the family. Protecting a worker's income during this crucial weeks- or months-long leave allows workers to heal or focus on their family members, while they enjoy the economic security of income replacement and continue to contribute to their local economy.
- **Paid Sick Days for more workers:** In 2011, I supported the landmark legislation to provide paid sick time workers at larger businesses within certain job categories. This basic protection has kept many workers in their jobs and able to meet their financial obligations when they (or a family member) becomes sick with a brief illness, but we need to include the almost 300,000 workers who were excluded by the initial policy in this protection.
- **Eliminate the Sub-minimum Wage for Tipped Workers:** No one should be paid less than the minimum wage, but for bartenders, servers, hotel staff and exploited restaurant employees, this is regularly the case. Protecting the full minimum wage for these employees will help lift these hard-working women and men out of poverty and give them the economic security of a more predictable paycheck.
- **Fair and Predictable Schedules:** Workers who are "on-call," frequently sent home after reporting to work, and unable to plan for a regular schedule find themselves unable to juggle transportation plans, childcare, other part-time jobs, and cannot survive never knowing from one week to the next how much they plan to earn in wages. Employers should respect workers' time and give notice of schedules in enough time for workers to plan their lives and responsibilities.

These policies are an investment in our families, our workforce, our businesses, and our health that we cannot afford to do without. I urge you to pass them to ensure fairness and health for both businesses and workers and level the playing field for small businesses.

