**Bianca, Pam**

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**From:** Alison Rau <alison.rau@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Thursday, February 12, 2015 10:09 PM
**To:** LABTestimony
**Subject:** Testimony in support of support of Senate Bills 798 and House Bills 5862 and 6566 Rau/Villani

Dear State Representatives and Senators,

We write in support of Senate Bills 798 and House Bills 5862 and 6566. As first-time expectant parents (baby boy due in May 2015), we plan to take time off from work (as a State Agency legal employee and a teacher for a Hartford magnet school) to bond with our new arrival and provide the ultra-important response to his needs for the crucial first months of life. This initial bonding period between parents and baby is considered to be of utmost importance for ensuring the normal cycle of attachment necessary for forming trust, conscience, and empathy later in life, as noted by esteemed psychiatrist Dr. Bruce Perry. However, since we are only allowed accumulated sick and vacation leave as paid leave in our professions, and we do not have much of either, we will be forced to take unpaid FMLA leave in order to remain with our infant for longer than one month. We cannot afford to take it for long, since we recently purchased a house and are paying off considerable graduate school debt.

The United States is far behind valuing families and children as compared to all other western democracies, which often allow for paid parental and family leave in excess of six months. The USA ranks only with Papua New Guinea and Oman for not having *any* federal program of paid family leave. It is time Connecticut invests in families by supporting paid leave measures to reflect the great social and fiscal need for these programs. Such laws protecting the right of families to take paid leave to bond with a new child, care for a sick family member, or care for themselves when ill result in a healthier population and workforce, more motivated to work hard and economically contribute after their return to work.

Please join the likes of California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island by supporting healthy families in Connecticut by supporting these bills. Your constituents and their families will thank you!

For more information, please refer to http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/paid-leave/paid-leave-works-in-california-new-jersey-and-rhode-island.pdf and http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/01/upshot/the-economic-benefits-of-paid-parental-leave.html?smid=fb-nytimes&smtyp=cur&bicmp=AD&bicmlukp=WT.mc_id&bicmst=1409232722000&bicmet=1419773522000&_r=0.

Sincerely,