

Labor and Public Employees Committee  
S.B. 221: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave  
Submitted by: Madeline Granato  
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Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Madeline Granato and I support SB 221: *An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave*. Though I am not a mother, a working caregiver, or recovering from an illness, I support paid family and medical leave as an absolute necessity for young workers like myself.

In today's economy, millennial employees – now the largest generation represented in the workforce – are currently burdened with economic challenges that are unique to our generation. Research has indicated that millennials are facing higher rates of poverty, lower incomes and increased student loan debt than previous generations did at the same age – all factors that are either adding difficulty to or preventing us entirely from starting families of our own.<sup>1</sup>

Most millennials are at the age most likely to be moving into management positions and having children at the same time, which explains why we're reportedly much more likely to seek out companies that offer paid parental leave and are happier, more engaged employees while working for those that do.<sup>2</sup> To stay economically self-sufficient, millennials want – and need – policies that support and celebrate working families.

Millennial workers are also more apt to job hop than previous generations – half of millennial employees expect to stay in their current positions for fewer than three years. The majority of millennials, however, report they would be less likely to leave a job with paid parental leave. Passing a statewide system of paid family and medical leave will not only help attract innovative workers and businesses into the state, but also create an environment that retains and supports the next generation.

Like me, a large number of millennials were barely infants when Connecticut became one of the first states to pass its own Family and Medical Leave Act in 1990, which offers up to 16 weeks (over a 2 year period) of unpaid, job protected leave to eligible workers. Twenty six years later, Connecticut's FMLA is unchanged – though shifting workforce dynamics, a fluctuating economy, increased cost of living and astronomical childcare rates would demand otherwise.

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<sup>1</sup>Frothingham, S. Broader Paid Leave Would Provide Opportunity and Security for Millennial Caregivers. Retrieved from: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/labor/report/2015/12/10/126840/broader-paid-leave-would-provide-opportunity-and-security-for-millennial-caregivers/>

<sup>2</sup>Shavin, N. Millennials Care About Paid Leave, And Aren't Afraid to Take it. Retrieved from: <https://newrepublic.com/article/121922/how-millennials-think-about-paid-leave>.

At the time, Connecticut was seen as a leader in supportive workplace policies. We carried that into 2011, when we were the first to pass paid sick days legislation. Now, we have the opportunity to become just the fourth state in the nation to enact a system of paid family and medical leave that values working families and understands the necessity of planning for the unplanned.

I urge you to support SB 221: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave to help young workers, like myself and so many others in our state, just beginning to juggle career and family. Thank you.