

Testimony of Stacey Zimmerman SEIU CT State Council

Support

SB 221 An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave

SB 393 An Act Concerning Domestic Workers

HB 5591 An Act Creating The Connecticut Retirement Security Program

Chairman Tercyak and Gomes distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Stacey Zimmerman; I am here today representing the Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council the state's largest labor union with over 65,000 members.

Today we will focus on SB 221 An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave but would like to be clear that SEIU – CT State Council proudly supports HB 5591 An Act Creating The Connecticut Retirement Security Program and SB 393 An Act Concerning Domestic Workers.

SB 221 An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave has the potential to bring Connecticut into the 21st Century by enacting a family, business and society friendly program that most industrialized countries adopted last century. Paid Family Leave is essential for a modern economy as the rest of the world knows as well as many innovative business leaders from around the country.

Campaign for Paid Family Leave Recommendations to “Make FMLA Work”:

- All employees, including state and municipal workers as well as private employees are eligible for paid family leave. Self-employed persons may opt in.
- In order to be eligible for paid family leave, a worker must earn \$9,300 in a 12-month base period; alternate calculation based on quarterly earnings. Earnings may be with one or multiple employers.
- Workers may use their leave for the reasons defined by CT's Family & Medical Leave Act with the addition of caring for a sibling, grandparent or grandchild, regardless of the age of the child or grandchild.
- Employees receive 100% of their weekly earnings up to \$1,000/week.
- Employees may take up to 12 weeks of paid family leave within a 12 month period with the ability to take leave incrementally. The waiting period before using leave is 7 days.
- Individuals who take paid family & medical leave will be returned to their jobs.
- The system is funded solely by employee contributions and administered by the Department of Labor.
- Includes additional measures to ensure that employees are not retaliated against for using their leave.

SEIU believes this bill fits these thresholds and encourages passage. Thank you