

I have been a paraprofessional in the Simsbury School system for ten years. My hours are restricted to 19 1/2 hours per week so I am not eligible to receive any benefits.

With the passing of PA 11-52, everyone in my building (including crossing guards, security guards, food prep workers and bus drivers) are now eligible for paid sick leave. I (and the other para who run the math resource lab) are the only ones currently in the building NOT getting paid sick leave.

Addressing CAPSS opposition to this bill:

\* CAPSS claim this burden is "so great" and would send the wrong message that spending money for paid sick leave for paras is more important than hiring teachers.

Most paras earn \$11-\$13 per hour, and a modest two day paid sick leave would cost Simsbury about \$150 per paraprofessional. And that is if every eligible para (there are 48 in the Simsbury schools) takes those two sick days.

Spending money for paid sick leave is not more important than hiring teachers. However, paid sick time is a fair and basic benefit that should be afforded to paras who are exposed to school children the entire day.

I say that CAPSS is sending the wrong message by not supporting this bill. It is sad that the people who lead the school system (superintendents) refuse to support any type of paid sick leave for paras. This just encourages paras who are ill to continue to work rather than receiving a reduced paycheck.

\* CAPSS claim that this bill would give victory to the bargaining agents before negotiations even begin.

I have never had any bargaining agents enlisted on my behalf. I am not aware of any agents working on our behalf. We have restricted hours so we cannot be union members with union benefits. Our pay scale is low (non-union) with small increases each year. A few of those years with Simsbury, I received no increase at all with my hourly rate.

I would respectfully ask that this bill not "die" again before this legislative session ends. I have tried since 2012 to pass a bill to allow paras some modest form of paid sick leave. We play a vital role in the schools and we wish to be recognized along with crossing guards, security guards and food prep workers who now receive paid sick leave.

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