

March 8, 2016

Dear members of the Labor Committee.

My name is Geralyn Norton. I live in Naugatuck and work as a server in a diner in the valley area. I am writing to you today to ask you to pass SB 221, an Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave.

I was attending the University of New Haven for a degree in forensic science but the tuition was so high, I decided to work for a few years to save up the money to continue. I have been working to save for three years now and I am nowhere close to even one semester of tuition saved. People think that every day for servers is some kind of bonanza where we collect hundreds of dollars in tips. In reality, I make enough to cover my rent, utilities, and food. Saving for school to get ahead in life is not a possibility for a server.

I fear that my dream of returning to school will be put on hold even longer because my mother has Multiple Sclerosis. Right now, she lives in Clinton with my father so the drive for me is long and eats up a lot of gas. It's expensive just to get out there. When my father needed surgery recently, I couldn't even step in and care for them because I couldn't afford to miss work, especially with what the commute would cost me.

A Paid Family and Medical Leave program would make it possible for me to take a couple of weeks to care for my mother if my father get sick again. Having a little financial security through Paid Family and Medical Leave would make the difference between being by my chronically ill mother's bedside or not seeing her at all.

Thank you,

Geralyn Norton  
Naugatuck