



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

### Member Organizations

**The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services**  
Ansonia, CT

**The Center for Family Justice**  
Bridgeport, CT

**Women's Center**  
Danbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program United Services**  
Dayville, CT

**Network Against Domestic Abuse**  
Enfield, CT

**Domestic Abuse Services Greenwich YWCA**  
Greenwich, CT

**Interval House**  
Hartford, CT

**Chrysalis Domestic Violence Services**  
Meriden, CT

**New Horizons**  
Middletown, CT

**Prudence Crandall Center**  
New Britain, CT

**The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services**  
New Haven, CT

**Safe Futures**  
New London, CT

**Domestic Violence Crisis Center**  
Norwalk, CT

**Women's Support Services**  
Sharon, CT

**Domestic Violence Crisis Center**  
Stamford, CT

**Susan B. Anthony Project**  
Torrington, CT

**Safe Haven**  
Waterbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program United Services**  
Willimantic, CT

## Testimony in Support of

### SB 221, AAC Paid Family and Medical Leave

### Committee on Labor and Public Employees

March 8, 2016

Good afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak and members of the committee. I am a graduate student interning at CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), which is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those agencies that serve them. Our members provide essential services to over 40,000 victims of domestic violence each year. Services provided include 24-hour crisis response, emergency shelter, safety planning, counseling, support groups and court advocacy.

#### We urge your support of SB 221.

CCADV is a member of the CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave, a group of diverse advocates who represent the needs of working families that have come together to explore how Connecticut can provide relief when an employee needs to take time to deal with illness or to care for a newborn. We support this effort to establish a paid family and medical leave system in the state.

Despite research showing that the benefits of a paid family leave system include a stronger work force, positive changes in wages, and lower use of public assistance, the U.S. is one of few developed countries without such a system. Although the FMLA requires that companies with more than 50 employees provide unpaid leave to eligible employees, most (78%) of the workers who are eligible for this type of leave don't use it because they can't afford to lose pay. Of course, employers can currently choose to provide paid leave at a cost to themselves; only 16% of employers in Connecticut do so.

The system that's being suggested would be fully funded by employees with no employer contribution. According to The Institute for Women's Policy Research, the cost to Connecticut employees would be very low at just about one half of one percent of someone's income.

Connecticut does have explicit leave from employment for victims of family violence (CGS § 31-51ss). Under that statute, victims can take paid leave if it is offered by their employer and they have time accrued; if employers do not offer paid leave, they are required to allow victims 12 days of unpaid leave. However, this time may not be sufficient for an employee to address his or her own serious health condition resulting from domestic violence, or to care for a qualifying family member with a serious health condition that resulted from domestic violence. Allowing people to care for a family member who has experienced this can be a critical piece of stabilization for the victim. Having access to a form of paid leave would be beneficial to many victims of domestic violence across the state.

Connecticut is a leader on family-friendly workplace policies, which in turn attract quality workers to the state. This investment in worker's health and well-being has been proven to increase worker productivity and commitment. We urge your support of this measure and the protections that it will provide to working Connecticut families.

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