



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 221:  
An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave**

**TO: Connecticut Labor & Public Employees Committee**

**FROM: Margot Dorfman, CEO, U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce**

**DATE: March 8, 2016**

My name is Margot Dorfman and I am the CEO of the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce (USWCC). I support SB 221, which would create a paid family and medical leave insurance system in Connecticut.

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce was founded to support the continued economic advancement of women. We are both a product, as well as a part of the great Civil Rights Movement. The Women's Chamber has over 500,000 members – young and old, students and retirees, employees and business owners.

Despite some of the testimony you may hear today from corporate lobbying groups, the debate over paid family and medical leave cannot be construed as a clear cut struggle between business owners and the labor force. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women are continually advancing in our workforce. They increasingly face competing pressures from their workplace and family care obligations. Businesses owned and run by women recognize that when employees are unburdened by concerns about balancing caregiving and professional demands, businesses can thrive and capitalize on motivated, committed employees.

Passage of SB 221, and the creation of a paid family and medical leave program in Connecticut, will ensure that men and women can afford to take the time they need to care for themselves or their families when someone becomes very sick or after the arrival of a child into the family. Protecting a worker's income during this crucial weeks- or months-long leave allows workers to heal or focus on their family members, while they enjoy the economic security of income replacement and continue to contribute to their local economy.

Moreover, passage of this important legislation in Connecticut will reduce health care costs over the long term and level the playing field between small and large firms. Workers who have access to paid leave are loyal employees that spare businesses the high cost of turnover.

Connecticut is already a leader on workplace policies that support both families and the economy; USWCC was proud to support Connecticut's paid sick day law, which was the first state law of its kind to pass in 2011. It is time for Connecticut to lead once again, this time on paid family and medical leave. This policy is an investment in our families, our workforce, and our health that we cannot afford to do without. I strongly urge you to pass SB 221.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Margot Dorfman'.

Margot Dorfman

