



**Connecticut Conference
United Church of Christ**

125 Sherman Street
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**Testimony in Support of S.B. 221:
An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave
Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate
Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ
March 8, 2016**

Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, and distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, and I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 221: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave, which would implement a system of paid family and medical leave in the state.

I am writing on behalf of the 235 congregations and more than 67,500 people in our state's churches. In fact, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. Nationally, the UCC has more than 5,700 congregations with nearly 1 million members. In 1988, the assembled delegates and ministers of the Connecticut Conference met and voted on a Resolution on Workplace and Family Life. That Resolution encourages public policy such as medical and leave benefits.

While the passage of the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was a step forward when it was enacted in the early 90's, it is not currently working for most employees. Seventy-eight percent of those eligible for FMLA do not take it because they cannot afford to take unpaid time off. Further, many employees are not eligible for this unpaid leave because their employers do not meet the minimum size requirements.

When employees have access to paid family and medical leave, they are happier and more productive in the workplace. The system that is being suggested would be fully funded by employees with no employer contribution and would provide up to 12 weeks of paid time off. According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, the cost to Connecticut employees would be about one-half of one percent of someone's income. Contributions would be calculated by a percentage; therefore, lower wage employees would pay less.¹

California, Rhode Island, and New Jersey offer paid family leave and several other states such as Colorado, Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont are considering legislation. As a state and country that supports family values, we should be doing more for our workers.²

The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ therefore urges the Labor and Public Employees Committee to support Senate Bill 221: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave, which would implement a system of paid family and medical leave in Connecticut. People deserve access to paid time off if they are seriously injured or ill, having a baby, or taking care of an ill parent, spouse or child. We do not think workers should have to choose between their health or the health of family members and their jobs.

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of Senate Bill 221.

Blessings,
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¹ CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave

² CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave



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