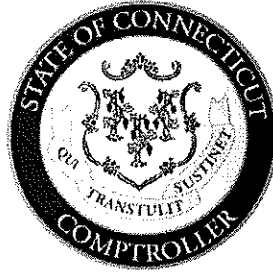


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**Written Testimony
Comptroller Kevin Lembo
February 16, 2017**

**Concerning
S.B. 1 & H.B. 6212 AA Creating a Paid Family and Medical Leave System in the State
H.B. 5591 AAC Pay Equity in the Workforce**

Good morning Senator Gomes, Representative Porter, Senator Miner, Representative Bocchino, and Members of the Labor Committee:

S.B. 1 & H.B. 6212 AA Creating a Paid Family and Medical Leave System in the State

Thank you for raising this legislation and for the opportunity to continue to show my support for efforts to create a program that covers paid family and medical leave.

A mechanism to offer an insurance product for replacement income for employees who need time away from work, that is consistent with the Connecticut Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), will make family and medical leave a more meaningful benefit and bolster family financial security.

According to AARP, studies show that throughout the year, there are 711,000 family caregivers in Connecticut providing 46 million hours of care, which has a value of \$5.8 billion. If family caregivers are no longer available, the cost to the U.S. healthcare and long-term services and support systems would increase significantly. Removing the threat of financial insecurity with paid family and medical leave would help alleviate additional burdens on already strained services and state resources.

The benefits to employees are clear, but employers may benefit from paid family and medical leave as well. In a comprehensive study of California's Family Leave Insurance program, a majority of employers showed either a cost savings or no additional costs related to implementation. According to a consultant for the New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA), New Jersey businesses have experienced little difficulty adjusting to the requirements of the state's laws and reported no impact on business profitability or employee productivity, no matter the size of the employer. Businesses in both states also credited the

state paid family and medical leave laws with increased morale and loyalty among their employees.

A well designed paid family and medical leave program should ideally be implemented in an efficient and cost-effective manner. One potential step toward accomplishing this would be to implement the program using a one year phased-in approach.

Such a program would enable workers to continue to contribute to the economy during times they would normally be unable to do so and also avoid additional strain on limited state government social program resources.

I hope you will support this legislation for your families, my family and Connecticut's working families.

H.B. 5591 AAC Pay Equity in the Workforce

Thank you for raising this legislation and for the opportunity to continue to show my support for efforts to make equal pay for equal work a reality. I supported the Governor's successful legislation on this issue in 2015, H.B. 5210 before this committee last week and I now support this effort toward ensuring pay equity and fairness.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, the 2015 median annual earnings for women were \$40,742, while \$51,212 for men. Should the pace of change for the annual earnings ratio continue at the same rate it has since 1960, men and women will not reach pay equality until 2059. Women of color are especially affected by pay inequity. Hispanic women make \$0.54 on the dollar paid to a white man, and African-American women make \$0.63 on that same dollar. In fact, the median earnings for Hispanic women are below the qualifying income threshold for food stamps eligibility, at \$31,247 per year.

I urge your support.

Thank you for your time.