

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5387

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE.

Vote Date: 3/20/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/8/2018

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor and Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

At one time or another, every employee will require time off for family/health issues. This fills the gap between the federal FMLA laws, which allow for unpaid leave, by providing a limited amount of paid family leave.

****Substitute Language (LCO #2902):** (1) Authorizes \$20 million in bonding for start-up costs, (2) eliminates a provision that repealed CGS Sec. 31-51rr, and (3) makes numerous technical and conforming changes.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

James M. Albis, Representative and Deputy Majority Leader, State of Connecticut: At some point in their careers, all employees will need time away from work to care for themselves or a family member. The only options for some are FMLA, which is unpaid, and insufficient to meet current economic needs of workers and businesses. This bill addresses this policy gap and allows employees to take job-protected leave. It is time to upgrade our FMLA laws.

Beth Bye, Senator, State of Connecticut: Earned family leave is a benefit available in every other industrialized nation in the world. It is a matter of basic human compassion and dignity. Businesses and families have developed a patchwork of ways to cope with the demands of workers requiring leave but it is frayed and insecure. At her place of worship, they end the service with the line "strengthen the faint hearted, support the weak, help the suffering, honor all beings". This bill helps achieve this.

Scott Jackson, Commissioner, Department of Labor: The Department of Labor supports this concept but has some concerns. The results of a report from a study issued by the Institute for Women's Policy Research provided an outline that would include the efforts and costs required to create and administer this program. The report predicted that start-up costs, which include building the information technology infrastructure, would be approximately \$13.5 million with a new division of approximately 120 employees would be required to administer the program. It is apparent that additional costs and personnel were not included in the report and the timeframe for building the program would be considerably longer than anticipated.

Kevin Lembo, Comptroller, State of Connecticut: If family caregivers were no longer available, the cost to the U.S. health care and long-term services, along with the necessary support systems would increase significantly. Removing the threat of financial insecurity would alleviate additional burdens on already strained services and state resources. Employers will benefit and show savings at no additional costs related to implementation. There would be increased morale and loyalty among employees. He suggested a one year phase-in approach that would enable workers to continue to contribute to the economy during times they would normally be unable to do so and avoid additional strain on limited state government social program resources.

Martin M. Looney, Senator, State of Connecticut: The 'real world' make-up of our modern day workforce is filled with many constituents who are working parents or work full-time while caring for aging parents. Providing a reasonable level of paid family and medical leave is not just a necessary—it is humane. Employees have no choice but to abandon family members in their time of need or neglect their own health. Working families should not have to face the prospect of economic ruin when presented with serious family needs.

Marilyn Moore, Senator, State of Connecticut: In her role as Chair of Human Services, she heard testimony of hundreds of men and women who are caregivers for parents, children, the elderly, sick and disabled. They are dedicated workers who want to support their families and are willing to stand together in their quest for a decent quality of life. They deserve and earn respect.

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in Connecticut, Inc. Twenty-five years ago last month, Connecticut led the way in passing the nation's first system of family and medical leave. However, the law hasn't kept pace with the realities facing many of today's workers, half of whom are not covered by the law and many who can't afford to take advantage because they are not in a position to miss a paycheck.

Rep. Kim Rose, Representative, State of Connecticut: Rep. Rose shared her experiences after being involved in a head-on collision by someone texting. First, she had to use all her accumulated time off and vacation time and faced 8 weeks of no income. She used most of her savings to survive and made calculated decisions to prioritize which bills would be paid. After her daughter gave birth to twins, she was only able to take 2 (unpaid) days off to help her. Paid family leave has a positive or neutral impact on businesses, yet it can completely change the workforce and career paths for many people when family or medical leave is an elective. Let's not drive young and talented people away from Connecticut. Having loyal and long-term dedicated employees will keep companies thriving and avoid staff turnovers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT

AARP Connecticut: This bill is a huge win for Connecticut.' FMLA is unpaid leave but the reality is many workers struggle to make ends meet and are unable to use it. Without paid leave and flexible workplace policies to support it, vulnerable seniors will increasingly be forced into taxpayer- supported nursing homes. This would put more pressure on our state budget. The availability of qualified caregivers is also an issue making it even more important to adopt this bill.

Jenevieve Ashman-Johnson, Hartford Resident: Her experience occurred after losing one of her infant twins and the stress of not being able to be with the remaining infant and her 3-year old daughter. She was not able to self-care, refocus or even be supporting enough to her children. She is not asking for anything she has not worked hard for. If you invest and support your workers and their families, you will achieve a positive financial outcome for CT.

Kellin Atherton, Middletown Resident: He was raised in accordance with evangelical values where the presence of the father is highlighted as a benefit for the growth and well-being of children. Behavioral issues, graduation, literacy, addiction and incarceration rates are attributed to absent fathers as the root cause. He defines "Fatherhood" as the presence and investment of time and energy into children. This bill offers the means and time necessary.

Ayana, Windsor Resident: The mother of two children, she was a State Employee and her maternity leaves were without pay. She filled out FMLA paperwork and was assured her job would be waiting, but she would receive no pay until she went back to work. This was taxing and stressful for her and her family. Something must be done. It would be comforting to know that if you are out of work to care for loved ones, a newborn baby or yourself, funds would still be coming in to pay bills.

Paula Bacolini, Glastonbury Resident: Her testimony told of personal experiences when she was ill and the stress she and her family members endured. We are all vulnerable to severe illness that can never be controlled or anticipated and Connecticut needs a system in place to protect employment.

Jennifer Barahona, Fairfield Resident: The lack of paid family leave is nothing short of appalling. As a social trauma worker, she is aware of the essential connection a caring and trusted loved one provides during critical life milestones. This includes the birth of children, family illness and death. This lack leads to poor outcomes for individuals and families that are costly to society.

Rob Baril, Secretary-Treasurer, SEIU Healthcare Employees Union: He was speaking for 26,000 private and public-sector health care workers in support of this bill. There are many data-driven arguments, citations and studies that make the case for this bill.. The rationale, intent and principles are compelling and the recommendations of the Task Force and Advisory Board should be followed.

Gabrielle Barnes, Hartford Resident: In this economy of high rents, low wages, excruciating student loan debts and rising food costs, few workers can afford to take 12

weeks off and support a family without EXTENSIVE community support from family, friends and even possibly the state. FMLA's eligibility requirements leave out about half the workforce. Paid leave builds and attracts a talented workforce. This bill needs to be passed.

Katie Berk, Clinical Psychologist, CT Lawmakers, Madison Resident: In her practice, she observed people who had severe bouts of anxiety. Many earn only as much as they need to cover bills and expenses. It is very important for them to avoid losing pay because of their commitment and devotion to their children. This bill would strengthen the health and happiness of people who suffer from stress, alienation and mental illness.

Alisha Blake, Birth and Postpartum Doula, Certified Lactation Counselor, New London Resident: She received an injury that left her unable to drive while she was working as a per diem employee in a hospital. She was also a small business owner. She depended on friends and family for everything. The United States and Papua, New Guinea are the only two countries in the world without Federal Paid Family Medical Leave. Other states are beginning to implement them and there is no reason for CT to be lagging.

Kelly Bondra, College Professor: Her experiences involved trying to balance time and schedules with her husband in order to care for their first- born child and avoid full-time daycare. They were effectively functioning as single parents with one leaving for work and the other taking over. Having a child doesn't have to be a luxury, but it shouldn't result in punishment. Sadly, most women see their careers, relationships and children suffer. It is time to realize when family leave is not provided, no one benefits.

John Brady, Executive Vice President, AFT CT: A paid family and medical leave system could save CT money because employees losing wages due to personal or family health issues would need less reliance on state assistance. Employees come to work ill so they won't lose income, but they often infect coworkers. The ability to heal at home without sharing illness means they would come back to work in a rested and healthy condition and be more productive.

Phylicia Rose Brown, Bridgeport Resident: Paid family and medical leave would give employees a sense of security when a major event occurs. Many people are caring for elderly parents. Life should be made a little easier for working people.

Marijane Carey, Maternal and Child Health Consultant, Connecticut MCH Coalition: When workers don't have access to paid leave, they're more likely to leave their jobs. It improves worker retention, increases morale & productivity and saves expensive turnover cost for employers.

Kristen Change, Canton Resident: Lack of state-wide paid leave legislation disproportionately harms those of a lower socioeconomic status. Many single women and struggling families are unable to take time off at all. It is time we treat new parents and those struggling to care for others as they deserve. The rest of the world understands this but America is just starting to wake up!

Jessika J. Coltz, Small Business Owner, Milford Resident: As a new mother, she was distracted and sleep deprived. The level of stress and the isolation involved in trying to manage a business and family are predictors for post-partum depression and anxiety.

Research shows lack of leave pushes parents out of the workforce and reduces a family's potential. If she had guaranteed income, her business could have used what would have been her compensation to hire someone to take on her workload and she could have focused on her own recovery and her family's transition. Her business would have been there waiting for her return.

Rachel Conley, Naugatuck Resident: She and her wife moved to CT from Georgia explicitly because they were ready to start a family and wanted to raise their children in a LGBT friendly state. She had extreme complications from pregnancy and her wife, a registered nurse at Yale-New Haven Hospital, was working physically intense 12-hour overnight shifts with a 45 minute commute each way. She was trying to keep up with everything involved with taking care of a house; grocery shopping, laundry, cooking and caring for the new mother and their baby. She was exhausted. They love this state because it has so much to offer from culture to gorgeous outdoor space and high quality education. This is an area where CT has room to improve and make itself more attractive for families looking to relocate. This issue will only become more pressing with time as their generation continues to expand their families and Generation Z begins to reach adulthood. Ct risks being left behind and losing families to surrounding states if they are not proactive in this area.

Laura Cordes, Executive Director, CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence: Certified sexual assault crisis counselors and advocates provide short- term individual counseling, group counseling as well as hospital, police and court accompaniments to victims of sexual violence. Every effort is made to accommodate the needs and schedules of victims when needed. They face many barriers including balancing employment and personal obligations while making time to seek counseling or support. They must navigate through the complicated health care and criminal justice systems. No worker should be forced to choose between their health and a family they love or the job they need.

Sarah Croucher, Executive Director, NARAL, ProChoice CT: This is a vital component supporting women so they can choose to have children and take the necessary leave required to meet their own health needs and those of their children without falling into debt. Many low-wage workers have this right limited through financial burdens due to the lack of access to paid family and medical leave. This bill will help promote gender equality.

Mayra Cruz & Danielle Hubley, Graduate Students, UCONN School of Social Work, Waterbury Resident: The USA is the only country without a Paid Leave System. We have a responsibility to the working class who are living from paycheck to paycheck. Everyone in the country should have access to paid family medical leave so they can take care of personal or family matters and still be responsible with their jobs. It would offer women more career paths and personal aspirations. It also attracts a stronger workforce.

Lauren Ruth, Connecticut Voices for Children: Paid leave leads to a host of positive life outcomes for both generations, including decreased infant mortality, decreased child behavioral problems, increased rates of breastfeeding duration, decreased rates of maternal post-partum depression, decreased rates of parental conflicts and increased rates of father involvement throughout childhood. This is an important role in nurturing long-term healthy child development. Workers take fewer and shorter sick leaves throughout the course of their careers. It attracts a strong workforce and keeps them there longer

Michael C. Culhane, Executive Director, CT Catholic Public Affairs Conference: This is a very reasonable and balanced attempt to address the issue of paid family and medical leave. The structures of the family, the nature of the work environment and the status of the economy have dramatically transformed. Some of the changes have conferred benefits to society and strong healthy families will yield a strong and healthy society. By alleviating the economic burden, paid family and medical leave is a policy that will sustain CT families in times of trouble.

Beverlee Fatse Dacery, President, Amodex Products, Inc.: She is a small business owner and is being asked to provide a benefit to her employers that she generally is unable to provide for herself! Owners struggle to take time off because they are often an integral part of the sales/management team and prolonged absence has a negative impact on revenue and operation. Small business management is being overlooked, especially those that are family owned/ operated. These businesses are flexible and they understand employees are vital to their success and are appreciated for their contributions. Within this framework, they support one another and make adjustments so when bad things do happen people cover for each other to get the work done. This teamwork builds a positive relationship. Once this relationship shifts from one that is mutually beneficial to one of entitlement, this relationship stops.

Christopher G. Donovan, Connecticut Education Association: CEA teachers witness the need for this system of paid family leave because they deal with the impact of family stress on students in their classrooms. Parents often don't have the time between work and family duties to provide the attention their children need. They often give up their own precious family time to devote more attention to students who are experiencing difficult situations at home. Chris's son and his family live in Canada and were grateful for a system that allowed both of them to cover a full year of care for their newborn daughter. New York provides up to three months of compensation through a maximum payroll contribution of \$85.65 per year. Connecticut needs to devise a fair system of paid family leave similar to those in neighboring states and nearly all other nations.

Elaine Dove, Hamden Resident: She was plaintiff in a case, North Haven Board of Education V. Bell, which centered on Title 9 and whether it protected teachers from sex discrimination in an education setting. After being approved for her fourth year of teaching, she was denied unpaid leave after giving birth. A year later, she applied for a similar position and was denied consideration. After several years, she ultimately prevailed in this landmark case. Even though winning, she suffered personally and each decision was extremely stressful. The notoriety of the case made school districts wary of hiring her and eventually she re-trained to be a clinical social worker. Laws should be passed to protect and support citizens. It is not likely that any organization or business in CT would voluntarily give a person paid family leave. Her daughter, the subject of the litigation, used paid leave in California after the births of her children. Connecticut needs to do the same.

Susan Eastwood, Board Member, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in Connecticut: Other states in our region have already passed similar bills and CT should follow. She personally was subjected to a series of life scenarios and developed a deep empathy with families who have limited fiscal margins and would be forced to make heartbreaking choices between losing their salaries or caring for themselves and/or loved ones in a time of need. This bill would benefit workers and draw young, talented employees

and businesses who would see the advantages of having loyal employees, creating higher morale and greater productivity.

Kimberly Edwards, New Haven Resident: Ms. Edwards shared her experiences when her son developed serious illness. Although protected by FMLA and using all her sick and vacation time, it was a struggle to get by. She was fortunate to have her fellow workers help her out. Life happens and workers should not have to make these choices.

Bill Ethier, Chief Executive Officer, Home Builders & Remodelers Association of CT, Inc.: They read through the testimony of Eric Gjede of CBIA and added their voices to this testimony. CT continues to suffer from a prolonged, depressed housing market. Unlike most of the rest of the nation, housing has yet to recover from the economic crash.

Carol Ann Feldman, West Hartford Resident: Having been a caregiver through necessity and choice most of her life, Ms. Feldman was always in fear of losing her job due to extended and/or intermittent absences from work. The financial burdens in these lapses decreased her income and she never fully anticipated the financial challenges. If Family Paid Medical Leave benefits had been available, it would have made all the difference and provided security for her and her family.

Joelle Fishman, CT Communist Party: Instead of getting stuck into trickle-down austerity measures that actually widen disparities; she urges passage of this legislation. It is a solution to give our state a significant economic boost by addressing a shameful and unsustainable inequality. It is unacceptable that due to the discriminatory wage gap, women overall earn 83 cents, Black women earn only 59 cents and Latina women earn only 48 cents for each dollar earned by a white man. Some women are working three jobs and still must rely on assistance because their wages are not enough to live on.

Scott D. Friedman, North Haven Resident: As a small business owner, he is strongly in favor of this bill. There is no way he could offer his employees paid leave benefits. Utilizing employee contributions would enable him to compete with the benefits of much larger companies. It would make his business a better place to work without costing him additional funds. During an employee's leave of absence, he could hire a temp and not be required to pay benefits. This bill is a huge win for Connecticut.

Abigail S. Friedman, North Haven Resident: The economic and social life of this state relies heavily on its ability to attract and retain young adults. Her personal experiences after giving birth to her first child and the difficulty she and her husband faced made her very aware of the possible problems any young family could face. Physicians call the first 3 months after birth the "fourth trimester" when infants are incredibly vulnerable to illness and gain immeasurably from forming strong and reliable attachments to their caregivers. This bill is a critical investment in the health of CT's children and families.

Maggie Gardner, Hartford Resident: Legislators need to recognize the importance of Paid Family and Medical Leave and pass it this session. She was in a unique position to address this bill because she had two battles with breast cancer. The first time, she had paid leave but the second time she did not. The unpaid leave forced her into a position of economic insecurity and uncertainty and she now struggles with depression. Medical leave is not a luxury; it is a necessity.

Lauren Garrett, Councilwoman At-Large, Hamden Resident: The oldest of three children, she had to stay home when one of her siblings was ill. She was fortunate to be a stay-at-home parent herself, but her own childhood shaped the reason she supports this bill. CT needs to strengthen our safety nets for our families and society.

Jillian Gilchrest, Member, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, Inc.: In 2012, she formed CT's Family Medical Leave Insurance Coalition. The state established a task force to study the feasibility and create a plan to build a coalition of hundreds of people, businesses and organizations who support a system of paid family & medical leave. This proposal is strong and good for workers, businesses and the state. The task force answered who, what, where and why, and the time is now.

Madeline Granato, Policy Manager, CT Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF): The time is now for CT to pass paid family and medical leave in order to attract a young workforce, remain competitive and support their workers. Although federal FMLA has provided job-protected leave to millions of workers since it was passed in the early 1990s, it is inaccessible to many workers. It applies solely to larger companies of 50 or more employees which leave out approximately 40% of the workforce. Even workers covered by FMLA cannot take this leave because they simply cannot afford to forego consecutive paychecks. This bill would boost productivity, attract top-notch young workers, lower expensive turnover costs and foster a greater attachment to the labor force.

Lauren Gray, Bridgeport Resident: This bill makes sense because it is employee funded and does not harm employers or small businesses. The benefits of this bill make sense. FMLA isn't working for too many families who can't afford to take unpaid leave. CT voters support paid family & medical leave, it benefits small and large businesses and would attract a talented workforce. It should become a reality for the employees of CT.

Donna Grossman, Windsor Resident: During the 40 years she worked at UTC as an engineer, she had three children and was the first woman in her department to return to work after a pregnancy. She received 2 weeks of paid sick time and 6 weeks of disability and then took a 3-month leave-of absence. A fellow worker, who also had a child, was forced to leave her full time job because she was suffering from exhaustion and could not afford to take leave. This system would attract young, talented people and help CT economically.

Sally Grossman, Business Owner, Windsor Resident: , a self-employed painting contractor, told of complications with her first pregnancy and how she was forced to return to work while she was still in pain from surgery. Twelve weeks without any sort of income at all put them in a financial hole from which it took years to recover. No woman should go into financial distress because of a pregnancy or be forced to choose between healing from major surgery or feeding their child.

Khadija Gurnah, Campaign Director, Moms Rising Org.: She represents CT residents who have joined together to take action in support of paid family and medical leave and submitted stories of experiences faced by some of the members. She had her first child out-of-state and moved to CT only to realize workers were not offered paid family leave when she had her second child. One in four new moms is back at work just two weeks after having a child. One in five retirees leaves the workforce earlier than planned to care for an ill spouse or family member. This law would impose no cost on employers and help CT stay competitive

so we won't lose workers to states where they won't have to choose between caring for their families and earning a paycheck. It is the right choice for employees, businesses and our economy.

Liz Halla-Mattingly, New Britain Resident: It is time for CT to make paid family leave a reality. Last year, Ms. Halla-Mattingly told of her own stressful experiences caring for a newborn and caring for her cancer-ridden mother. This year she related the experiences of the family of one of her daughter's friends who had Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. Immediately after her diagnosis on a Tuesday, she was admitted to the hospital and treatment began. However, her mother went back to work on the following Monday because she was the sole income earner for the household. Although eligible for FMLA, she could not afford to take the time off. At 6-years old, this little girl was faced with losing her hair, side effects from drugs and a long rotation of inpatient and clinical care, all without her mother. FMLA did not work for this family. We must do better.

Steven Hernandez, Executive Director, Commission on Women, Children and Seniors: CT's original model provided workers with the security of knowing they could not be fired if they took extended leave which became the blueprint for landmark federal law. However, because many employers did not meet the size threshold, many employees were not eligible. The key to making these benefits work is streamlined administration with reduced cost to the state, IT infrastructure and nimble procurement and workforce practices and minimized upfront cost to the state. An option that would accomplish all there of these goals includes a public-private partnership

Patrice L. Holiday, Windsor Resident: . This bill would provide options and offer security to employees who must care for themselves or family members during difficult times.

Dr. Valerie Horsley, Co-founder, Action Together Connecticut: This legislation would force employers to be more equitable in their salaries and lessen the burden of each individual. A professor at Yale University, she testified as a private citizen and defined clinical compression, which occurs when duties are missed when someone takes family leave. This practice pressures colleagues to work extra hours without extra compensation and forces clinicians to return to work quickly after their children are born. The situation is not ideal for patients or for parents who are doctors.

Katharine Hamilton Moser, Farmington Resident: She had access to paid family leave when she had a child and was able to stay home with her newborn and recover from the exhaustion following giving birth. This was fortunate because she would not have been safe and effective at her job which was demanding and required she be alert and professional at all times. After 12 weeks when she did return to work, she was comfortable leaving her baby in daycare. She was able to perform her job safely, effectively and at the level her employer expected. The employer didn't worry about losing a worker they had invested significant time, money and resources to train, or spending considerable money recruiting, hiring, on-boarding and training a new employee. Other states offer this, and CT should, too

Paula Kavathas, Professor of Laboratory Medicine, Yale School of Medicine: A mother of two and a professor teaching microbiology and immunology, she told the importance of breast feeding in passing immunity to the baby and the nutrients to support the development

of a healthy microbiome. A key nutrient is not found in cow's milk or formula. Having 12 weeks of paid leave is important for the health of both newborns and families.

Christy Kovel, Director of Public Policy, Alzheimer's Association Connecticut:

Demographics continue to shift in CT and more families are facing the challenges of caring for aging relatives. While family caregiving can be a rewarding experience, caregivers often face challenges that leave them overwhelmed, anxious and/or intimidated by their duties. Financial strain is one of these challenges. Caring for someone with Alzheimer's is particularly difficult and their caregivers should not have to face financial ruin.

Julie Kushner, Director, UAW, Region 9A: CT is at a competitive disadvantage as long as we do not pass and implement a universal, sustainable program of paid family and medical leave. The need for paid family and medical leave is a reality of the times. The FMLA, which was passed decades ago, is unrealistic for too many workers who cannot afford to lose pay. It is inaccessible for 40% of the workforce who work for small businesses.

Jessica Labrencis, Attorney, West Hartford Resident: When her son was born, she was employed as an attorney for a small firm and was not covered under FMLA because there were not 50 employees. Her husband was an enlisted sailor, and it would have been financially difficult to take unpaid time off. Yet while living in California for eight years when her husband served there, she was fortunate to participate in their paid family and medical leave system. CT workers should have these same opportunities.

Ned Lamont, Small Business Owner: This bill is an important moral investment. Workers in CT should not have to choose between spending the first days with their child, the last days with their parents or paying their mortgage.

Patricia Lang, AARP CT Volunteer, Newington Resident: She was testifying not for herself, but for her future self. She has concerns her 47-year old son would not be able to take unpaid leave to care for her if necessary and still be able to support his wife and two children. Care in a nursing home would cost the State more money than if she received care from her family. The majority of those benefiting from this law are women in predominately low-paying jobs who don't have the time or the means to testify for themselves. This is an innovative, cost-effective caregiving solution that would add to our state's reputation without adding to our budget.

Bridgette Lantagne, Hartford Resident: She has about a month to go in her pregnancy, and is concerned / stressed about financial stability. If this bill were passed, not only would families be able to build savings, but businesses would see better employee retention. This would allow women to be more independent and secure. Child and elder care disproportionately falls on women and prevents them from being able to create long-term financial stability.

Zak Leavy, Legislative Advocate, AFSCME Council 4: Paid family medical leave is a necessary benefit for workers. It is long overdue. This bill is good public policy and should be adopted.

Samantha Lew, CT Association for Human Services (CAHS), University of Connecticut School of Social Work, Student: This bill would create a public insurance policy, paid for by

employee contributions, and create a new program to protect CT's children and families. Low-wage hourly workers are less likely to have access to time off, paid or unpaid. They barely make ends meet and face impossible choices when life events happen. This bill would alleviate these situations.

Mary Lee Kiernan, President & CEO, YWCA Greenwich and Board Member, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women: This is an opportunity to establish a security system without creating additional cost for employers who already may have disability insurance and various paid leave policies. It may save significant money in operating budgets and provide economic security. It also increases job satisfaction, improves workplace culture and enhances employee productivity

Tara McDonough, Graduate Student of Social Work, UCONN, Wallingford Resident: Tara told the difficulty her parents faced when her 7-year old brother developed non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. It is essential to expand the definition of family to include a broader spectrum of family relations for paid medical leave, include family structures like LGBTQ partnerships, or families where a grandparent, sibling or blood relative is the primary caretaker.

Rick Melita, Director, Service Employees International Union, CT State Council: There are 3 ways for low- wage workers to get ahead – through market forces, collective bargaining and by government intervention. This is a tool to help workers achieve a better life. Working families deserve a raise, the ability to care for a sick loved one without risking financial catastrophe and ensure that women deserve to be paid fairly for the work they do. The state needs this bill.

Carlos Moreno, CT Director, Working Families Organization: CT must address the need for paid leave for employees facing family or health crisis. Too many families are just a couple of paychecks away from being unable to pay their bills when a sudden medical crisis or a new child puts them in an impossible position. Families become financially insecure and cannot contribute to the local economy with any disposable income. They must rely on safety- net programs which are paid for by our State and federal governments. This program would be funded through employee premiums of approximately 0.5% of weekly earnings. The required start-up costs would be funded by bond allocations and reimbursed to the General Fund within the first year of collection. The cost of doing nothing is too high for our state to bear.

Danielle Morfi, North Haven Resident: She learned as caregiver for her terminally ill father that it is tortuous to watch your loved one die and simultaneously worry about being able to afford the time you are taking off. After giving birth, she was unable to drive, lift or do anything strenuous. With no family nearby, her husband had to use paid vacation time. The fact that they played Russian roulette with health is disturbing and unacceptable. People across the state have gone bankrupt over medical crises that are not only emotionally and physically traumatic, but devastating to their financial stability for years to come.

Michele Mudruck, Legislative Advocate, CT Conference, United Church of Christ: While the passage of the FMLA was positive in the early 90's, it is not working for most employees. The majority aren't able to take it because they can't afford to lose pay. Many aren't eligible

because their employers don't meet the size requirements. When this is available, employees are happier and more productive.

Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, Norwalk Resident: Her experiences after giving birth made her even more passionate about the need for paid family leave. She highlighted three ways Connecticut would be better off: First, paid family leave would attract employees in a competitive labor market. Second, paid family leave would retain employees where businesses have already invested time in recruiting and training. Third, paid leave would offer healthier child development and allow parents the necessary time to bond with their newborns. If paid leave were open to all parents, more fathers and non-biological parents would be able to enjoy these benefits. If we want fathers to be equally engaged in raising their children, we need to give them equal opportunities.

Lori Pelletier, President, CT AFL-CIO: Nearly every employee has struggled to balance family and work responsibilities but there are occasions when this is impossible. Earned family and medical leave would help businesses reduce costs and level the playing field for employers while allowing workers to meet health and/or caregiving responsibilities. It would improve worker retention, save turnover costs, increase worker productivity, improve employee loyalty and boost morale.

Sarah Prager, Wallingford Resident: Ms. Prager's testimony told of the struggle she and her wife had after the birth of their daughter. Even with a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree, her wife had no paid leave available. She had complications and had to return to the hospital for multiple postpartum infections but her wife still had to work and was unable to be with her and the baby. This was a time they needed to be together as a family. Paid leave would have allowed this to happen. She is a published author, public speaker and marketing consultant. Both their careers make them an asset to CT and they want to stay here, but this benefit is a make-or-break issue.

Ann Pratt, Director, Organizing for CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG): The federal system for supporting and investing in this fundamental core value is inadequate. The eligibility requirements leave out about half of the workforce and even among those who are eligible; many cannot use the benefit because they can't afford to miss a paycheck. Younger workers are more likely to seek out companies that offer paid leave and are happier, more engaged employees when they work where this is offered.

Analís Quintman, Hamden Resident: Although she has always worked where personal time off was offered, she has witnessed the plight of people who do not. Family leave would reduce stress and promote better work performance

Paula Resch, Hamden Resident: During the years when their children were small, they were lucky to have academic schedules that were able to be adjusted to allow adequate child care. Only a very small minority of the population is in a situation where they are able to do this. This is not good enough. Parents should not have to decide between caring for a sick child and making a day's pay.

Alice M. Sexton, Glastonbury Resident: She relayed two different scenarios. After having surgery on her right knee, she received her usual salary and benefits because she has accrued sufficient paid sick leave. Around the same time, a friend and mother of 3 children,

broke her right ankle and was unable to drive. She did not qualify for paid leave which was compounded by large medical bills. Connecticut must treat their citizens better! No family should have to make these decisions.

Jeff Shaw, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, The Alliance: Nonprofits want to provide excellent benefits for their employees, but the state needs to build-in protections and resources for such increased costs in all current and future contracts and grants. Nonprofits contracting with the state to provide essential services can only afford benefits to the extent that the contracts pay them for the costs. Failure to do this will mean fewer programs and fewer people receiving services.

Stacy Stableford, AARP, Connecticut: Illness, accidents, newborns, adoptions and old age will touch every one of us at some point in our working lives. Family caregivers are the backbone of Connecticut's long-term care system that makes it possible for older adults and people with disabilities to remain in their homes and out of costly, taxpayer-funded institutions. Federal FMLA is unpaid, but many workers are not even eligible because the law only applies to businesses with more than 50 employees and restricts the family members needing to care for a minor child, parent, dependent adult child or spouse. The reality is many workers, who are struggling to make ends meet from paycheck to paycheck, can't afford to take unpaid leave. Family caregivers should not have to choose between taking care of a loved one, losing a paycheck or losing their jobs.

Kari A. Swanson, North Haven CT Resident: A faculty member at Southern Connecticut State University, she took unpaid leave after the birth of her children. The University does not offer this benefit and staff must return to work 2 weeks after giving birth. CT should offer time off to recover from childbirth, from serious illness or injury, or to take care of an ill family or dying loved one. Employers benefit because qualified workers would be retained and the expenses involved in recruiting and retraining replacements would be avoided.

Todd Szoka, Owner, Colchester Sunshine Cycle & Run: As a small business owner, he had an employee who had to deal with the terminal illness and death of his mother. After using up all his PTO, he had to take unpaid leave which caused him financial stress. With just 3 employees, he had to find ways to cover his absence and was unable to help. As a parent and business owner, he urges support of this bill.

Sharon Thompson, Ph.D., President, Postpartum Support International, CT Chapter: Parental leave policies in the United States reflect a lack of understanding the transition to parenthood, the needs of infants and the transactional relationship between parent workers and their employers. They are inconsistent among employers, creating tremendous inequalities and negative relationships between employers and employees. Cultivating retention among employees begins with fair and equitable policies and practices that support humanistic needs.

Dominique Torok, National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter: Paid family and medical leave is essential for the economic stability of families and individuals. In a woefully impacted economy with numerous social service needs, CT continues to experience budget cuts. We must ensure families receive the basic needs to sustain. Social work professionals work with clients in a situation where they need additional help. They are put under stress by

having to make difficult decisions. In life-changing or challenging situations, affording basic needs should not be a prominent worry.

Sarita Torres, Monroe Resident: Her daughter-in-law was admitted to ICU after having experienced post-op issues after a high-risk pregnancy and delivery of a premature baby. A nurse, she had 12-weeks of paid leave absence which was critical at this time. The paid leave was extremely helpful and allowed adequate time to bond during this critical time of development. This is why the current FMLA does not go far enough in addressing the issues and must be include time off with pay in emergencies.

Jessica Torres, Stamford Resident: Testimony was submitted by a friend of Jessica, a single mom, who was not able to make the public hearing because her son was ill. She is the parent of a chronically ill child and uses FMLA intermittently. Although she has job protection, she is not paid for the time she must take off. This is detrimental to her finances that are needed to pay basic necessities such as rent, medications and bills. CT is only getting more expensive and when you lose wages due to uncontrollable circumstances, it becomes harder to stay.

Arvia Walker, Public Policy and Strategic Engagement Specialist, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England: Reproductive freedom means every person should have access to resources to live the lives they choose, plan their families, and raise their children free of barriers. The current system of FMLA is not working. Advocates and decision makers must center the people who are disproportionately impacted by the intersecting systems of oppression. Paid leave laws and policies must apply to ALL families and ensure all workers can use their leave to care for those who are most important in their lives. It is time to recognize paid family leave as a human rights issue that will have a crucial impact on the residents of our state.

Brenda Watson, Executive Director, Operation Fuel: FMLA's eligibility requirements leave out about half of the workforce and even among those who are eligible, many can't take advantage because they simply can't afford to miss a paycheck. Paid leave builds and attracts a talented workforce. Millennials are more likely to seek out companies that offer paid leave and are happier, more engaged employees while working there. It is a way to attract a young, talented workforce and remain economically competitive.

Matthew D. Weldon, Assistant Director, Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training: He offered detailed information to help CT make a decision implement this bill. Rhode Island finalized a bill that would embed the new program into their existing Temporary Disability Insurance program (TDI), which was the first in the country. They had many discussions around each aspect. The single most important thing was they would be able to operate one program with different tracks. The new program operated under the same department that administered RI's Unemployment Insurance program. The TDI governing statutes were modeled after those of the UI program and the rules and practices were closely aligned to ensure efficient and effective administration. They gather the wage information needed to establish a claim through already collected data and are able to assist claimants who may transition from one program to another. Because the staff is familiar with both programs, they have the ability to access information from one program to the next to help keep claims active. The staff is able to move between programs when necessary to help cover work overloads, so they have the capacity to assist customers in both programs when

demand is high. He offered contact information and would be happy to help or answer any questions.

Molly Weston Williamson, Staff Attorney, A Better Balance: Often military families lack the protections needed when their loved ones are called to active duty. In a survey, 42% of military spouses reported experiencing more than six months of family separation in the last 18 months. Families who make these sacrifices deserve paid time off when they need it to address the effects of deployment. Due to the impact of the military lifestyle, 21% of military spouses are unemployed, despite actively seeking employment. Paid family leave is NOT bad for small businesses. Without a state program, they cannot afford to offer the same generous leave benefits as larger companies and are at a competitive disadvantage in hiring. With paid leave through a social insurance program, the playing field is leveled. She did feel the bill could be improved. The current proposal would deprive workers employed by a business with only one employee. It is unfair and arbitrary to exclude these workers. Also, the definition of the word “employee” should include domestic workers employed in the home of another person. They are disproportionately likely to be women, people of color and immigrants. They deserve protection and should have the same right to paid family and medical leave as other workers.

Steven Winter, Alderman 21st Ward, New Haven Resident: When his wife was hospitalized for multiple surgeries for ovarian cancer, he was fortunate to have an employer who was understanding so he did not have to choose between caring for the most important person in his life or his work. No one should be forced to make this inhumane choice. Governments around the world guarantee paid family and medical leave, but our federal government has failed to take appropriate action on the issue. Connecticut must act.

Richard Yanowitz, PhD, Hamden Resident: Now 76 and retired, he was a single parent from the time his son was 3 months old. He is keenly aware of the vital importance of the emotional connection between parent and child, which is dependent in great part on how secure parents feel. He was fortunate enough to attend graduate school and work mostly as a teacher and technical writing consultant, which allowed him more control over his time than most working people. Yet he never had a guarantee of medical leave. He is concerned about parents whose financial lives are challenged in ways that high-income parents’ aren’t. No one wants a society where effective child rearing is dependent on income.

Yolanda, Windsor Resident: When her mother became ill with stomach cancer and required round-the-clock care, she was told by her employer of 35 years she had to fill out FMLA paperwork and explained she was running out of sick time. The fact that she was missing work because of her mother’s illness and not her own was an issue. There needs to be some changes. We must do better for our elderly and make sure they are given proper care whenever needed.

Rebecca Yungk, Graduate Student, UConn School of Social Work, New Britain Resident: In order for female employees to balance work with caregiving, pregnancy or other medical responsibilities for themselves and their families, there must be workplace protection so employees have the opportunity to take time off and still have their jobs protected when re-entering the workforce. Guaranteeing living wages and equal pay is critical.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Eric Gjede, CBIA, Counsel: . One-size-fits-all paid leave is not practical in the modern workplace. The business community is already moving in the direction of more workplace flexibility. CBIA supports employers that voluntarily adopt paid family and medical leave

Todd David Krechevsky, Director of Public Policy, Waterbury Regional Chamber: They support their members who voluntarily adopt paid family and medical leave programs but oppose the inflexible and unsustainable state mandate proposed. Many state rankings show that operating a business in CT. is more costly than elsewhere. Each additional workplace mandate increases the cost separation between CT and other states. Every version of this bill has proven costly for employees who are required to contribute a portion of their paycheck. It is also costly for employers and requires them to maintain a job for an employee who is absent up to 12 weeks each year while having to pay for expensive nonwage benefits. For most small businesses, this is impossible.

JoAnn Ryan, Northwest CT Chamber of Commerce

Peter J. Prunty, Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce: This is a well-intentioned but flawed bill. The one- half- of- one percent is inadequate to pay for the program. There should be greater deductions from workers' pay to adequately fund it. There is a cost to employers who would continue to pay three months of benefits associated with leaves to hire replacement workers. This concept has failed in other states. It would be expensive and impractical.

Lumber Dealers Association of Connecticut: Although not in opposition of the intent of this bill, they submitted negative testimony because it would be far too expensive for employers, employees and the state. LDAC members do provide paid leave, but their independent, family- owned and operated businesses do this in order to recruit and retain quality employees; not because of a mandate. They would like to support their employees but if CT continues to adopt mandates that make it harder and more expensive to do business in the state, it will cause difficulties.

National Federation of Independent Business: The bill is well-intentioned, but they urge rejection because by vastly expanding eligibility requirements, there would be unintended consequences and costs for employers in terms of both staffing and lost productivity. It would create a new state-run program requiring administration and paid benefits which would be a significant cost burden on the state and taxpayers. Government mandates take away small employers' and employees' freedom to negotiate their benefits packages. Experiences in other states have shown these types of programs are not only costly, but underutilized as well.

Michelle Noehren, Colchester Resident: She was fortunate enough to have an understanding employer but the majority of new mothers and many lower-income women end up going back to work within two weeks after giving birth. New parents should not be forced back to work before they are physically and emotionally ready. This bill would make a huge difference to people with multiple chronic illnesses who want to work and are great at their jobs, but need time off now and again to tend to their needs. It is especially devastating when a child becomes seriously ill. Our families in crisis should be assured they will be able to stay afloat financially while navigating through a terrible situation.

Wendy Traub, Owner, Hemlock Directional Boring, Chairman, National Federation of Independent Business Council: Business owners in Ct are already faced with hiring difficulties without this mandate. While they feel the bill is well-intentioned, they urge rejection because by vastly expanding eligibility there would be unintended consequences and costs for employers in terms of both staffing and lost productivity. It would create a new state-run program requiring administration and paid benefits which would be a significant cost burden on the state and taxpayers. Government mandates take away small employers' and employees' freedom to negotiate their benefits packages. Experiences in other states have shown these types of programs are not only costly, but underutilized as well.

Reported by: Marie Knudsen

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