

+Labor and Public Employees Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING EARNED FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE.

Vote Date:

Vote Action:

PH Date: 3/8/2018

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor and Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Employees finding it necessary to take medical or family leave must take unpaid leave. This bill would establish an earned paid leave system.

****Substitute Language (LCO #2905):** (1) Authorizes \$20 million in bonding for start-up costs, (2) eliminates a provision that repealed CGS Sec. 31-51rr, and (3) makes numerous technical and conforming changes.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:

Kevin Lembo, Comptroller, State of Connecticut: Comptroller Lembo said if family caregivers are no longer available, the cost to the U.S. health care and long-term services and support systems would increase significantly. Removing the threat of financial insecurity would help alleviate additional burdens on already strained services and state resources. Employers will benefit and show a cost 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.

Scott Jackson, Commissioner, Department of Labor: Commissioner Jackson said the Department of Labor supports this concept. However, he has concern and cited the results of a report from a study issued by the Institute for Women's Policy Research that 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 cost approximately \$13.5 million and that a new division of approximately 120 employees would be required to administer the program.

Rep. James Albis, State Representative: His testimony supported this bill because it fills a financial gap and would allow employees to address any serious illnesses of their own or of family members. Creating a comprehensive statewide system of paid family/medical leave also increases the likelihood that workers would return to their jobs instead of dropping out of the labor force.

Luke A. Bronin, Mayor, City of Hartford: Mayor Bronin said the USA is the only developed country in the world with no national law to provide family leave. Many of our neighbors have enacted forms of paid leave and this bill is modeled after these successful systems. A fair system of paid leave is good for employees and businesses.

Martin M. Looney, Senator, State of Connecticut: Sen. Looney testified about the ‘real world’ make-up of our modern day workforce, filled with many constituents who are working parents or who work full-time while taking care of aging parents. Providing a reasonable level of paid family and medical leave is not just a necessary—it is also 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 such as caring for a newborn, spouse or a parent.

Marilyn Moore, Senator, State of Connecticut: Sen. Moore, in her role as Chair of Human Services, has heard testimonies 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.

Rep. Kim Rose, Representative, State of Connecticut: Rep. Rose shared her experiences after being involved in a head-on collision by someone texting. She first 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 had to make 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. 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 young 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: 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, losing a paycheck or losing their job.

Liza Andrews, Director of Public Policy & Communications, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence: She testified support of this bill because it would help create a stronger work force and affect positive changes in wages. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act does not work for many families and provides only unpaid leave for companies with 50 or more employees. This bill would also provide a meaningful source of support for survivors of domestic violence. Ultimately it would lower the use of public assistance.

Jenevieve Ashman-Johnson, Hartford Resident: Ms. Ashman-Johnson related the problems she faced after giving birth to twin girls pre-maturely. The babies required extensive care and paid family leave would have saved her from tremendous stress by allowing her time to be with her children and to self-care. Investing support for working-class families would have a positive financial outcome for Connecticut.

Kellin Atherton, Middletown Resident: Mr. Atherton compared the average 11 weeks most new mothers take after childbirth to the one week fathers spend with their newborns. He cited research showing that behavioral issues, graduation, literacy, addiction and incarceration rates point to absent fathers being the root cause. This bill would offer new fathers the means and time needed to devote to their families.

Paul Bacolini, Glastonbury Resident: She told of her experiences in caring for her ill mother, who lived in NY, while she was working in CT. Family members should be assured they are able to care for their loved ones and still maintain their jobs and incomes when coping with illnesses that are uncontrollable.

Jennifer Barahona, Fairfield Resident: As a social worker, she told of difficulties she personally faced as well as those of her clients. People should not be put in a position where they have to decide between going to work and caring for themselves or a sick or dying loved one. We are all vulnerable and never know when a serious diagnosis will suddenly require our time and attention. Paid family leave has been proven effective in other states without a financial cost to the state. This is an opportunity to join all but one other country in the world in providing what should be a basic human right for the people of Connecticut.

Gabriella Barnes, Hartford Resident: Ms. Barnes said the federal FMLA provides up to 12 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave but in this economy of high rents, low wages, excruciating student loan debts and rising food costs, few people can afford to take 12 weeks off. This bill should be supported because polls have found that CT voters want this bill. It builds and attracts a talented workforce and benefits large and small businesses alike.

Phylicia Rose Brown, Resident of Bridgeport: Ms. Brown said paid family and medical leave will ensure that people have a sense of security when a major event occurs. In the community where she lives, many people care for elderly parents and need to take time off to attend to their needs. This bill would make life a lot easier for many working people.

Marijane Carey, Hamden Resident, and Maternal and Child Health Care Consultant: The goal of maternal and child health is to improve the well-being of pregnant women, mothers, fathers, infants and children. It is used as a predictor for future generations to

identify challenges for children, their families, communities and the health care delivery system. It is essential for ensuring families are not economically compromised or financially stressed while taking time off after a birth or adoption. Among other benefits, it will result in lower infant and child mortality, higher birth weights, multiple health benefits due to increased time breastfeeding and better parent-infant bonding.

Kristen Chang, Canton Resident: Having experienced difficulties after the birth of her children and being overwhelmed with the responsibility, Ms. Chang was forced to recruit her family to help out. The 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 much time off at all. The rest of the world seems to recognize the importance of time spent with their new babies and sick families; it is time for America to wake up and address this problem.

Jessika J. Coltz, Milford Resident: As a small business owner, she was personally confronted with problems after the birth of her daughter. Although she had help, it was a drain on her business partner and family. The level of stress and the isolation involved in trying to manage so much are predictors of post-partum depression and anxiety. Research shows lack of leave pushes parents out of the workforce which reduces both a family's purchasing power and tax revenue. Paid leave is good for moms, babies, families and business.

Rachel Conley, Naugatuck Resident: She and her wife moved to CT because they were ready to start a family and wanted to raise their children in an LGBT friendly state. With no friends/family nearby, they had to deal with the complications of a difficult birth and post-partum depression. Her wife had to return to work only 48 hours after the baby was born. She feels CT has much to offer from culture to gorgeous outdoor spaces, high quality education and more, but this is an area that needs improvement to make it attractive for young families looking to relocate. CT will be left behind our neighboring states if incentives are not enacted.

Bruce Conroy, Wallingford Resident: Mothers returning to work before they should is the beginning of a slide towards unemployment and poverty. To be forced to choose between work and the welfare of one's family is not a choice anyone should have to make. CT needs a system that cares what happens to families. Benefits of this bill include drawing more and better companies to the state, increasing productivity and corporate profits, and creating opportunities to cross-train workers which would give companies a more skilled and versatile workforce. This would make our economy stronger. Business will follow where Labor leads.

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.

Jordan Cozby, President, Yale College Democrats: Jordan said our nation's persistent lackluster progress on issues of equality and justice is deeply rooted in our economic system. As the richest country on the planet, it is an enormous shame that we don't have the courage to implement strong paid family leave guarantees. From gender equality to building strong families, the motivations for enacting paid family leave appeal broadly across the political spectrum. It is crucial that CT's leaders take a stand to demonstrate our values.

Sarah Croucher, Executive Director, NARAL Pro-Choice CT: Ms. Croucher testified paid family and medical leave is a vital component of supporting women so they can choose to have children knowing their healthcare needs will be met without them falling into debt. This right is limited to many low-wage workers because of the financial burdens represented by their lack of access to paid family and medical leave. Providing paid leave to all individuals who face caregiving responsibilities also contributes to gender equity.

Mayra Cruz, Waterbury Resident: Having experienced many difficulties first-hand when her parents were faced with serious illness, she strongly supports this bill. The U.S. is the only country in the world without a Paid Leave System. CT has a responsibility to its working class people who are living from paycheck to paycheck.

Michael C. Culhane, Executive Director, Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference: This proposal is a very reasonable and balanced attempt to address the issue of paid family and medical leave in the state. Over the last several decades, the structure of the family has dramatically been transformed and additional burdens have been placed on them. Strong healthy families yield a strong, healthy society. By helping alleviate the economic burden, paid leave will remove the burden of having to make extremely difficult decisions between caring for a loved one or earning a paycheck.

Christopher G. Donovan, Connecticut Education Association: It is important for Connecticut to create and implement a comprehensive, statewide system of paid family and medical leave for workers who need to take time off. The choice of continuing employment or caring for a loved one can be remedied with a fair system of temporary compensation. Connecticut should consider devising a plan similar to those in many of our neighboring states and nearly all other nations.

CT Voices for Children - Lauren Ruth, Ph. D., Advocacy Director, Sharon Langer, Consultant, and Karen Siegel, Health Policy Fellow.: CVFC submitted written testimony in support. They said this bill will help families develop strong and healthy relationships, ease the burden on low-income families and help develop a healthier and more productive work force in the state. Research shows paid parental 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 conflict and increased rates of father involvement throughout childhood. Paid family and medical leave is a smart investment to attract a talented young workforce to the state. With strong workforce availability, companies will follow.

Sarah Healy Eagan, Child Advocate, Office of the Child Advocate: Her support testimony said this bill will help ensure a thriving and complete workforce by increasing the productivity, health and well-being of employees. It would ease the stress some parents have

of balancing obligations to their child and the necessity of attending work in order to support their families. This is a sound economic policy that would attract and maintain residents who will set down roots, grow a family and retire in the State.

Susan Eastwood, Board Member, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in Connecticut: After personally being subjected to a series of life scenarios, Ms. Eastwood 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.

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: She testified this bill 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.

Heather Foster, New Haven Resident, Member of Yale College Democrats, Yale Every Vote Counts: Ms. Foster testified that her dad, a high-school math teacher, was able to enjoy the privilege of spending the first three months of her life by her side because she was born in June. This opportunity to care for a newborn child or ill loved one should not be based on luck. This opportunity should be guaranteed. This bill works it a reality for throughout the state to reduce an employee's risk of bankruptcy and increases the employee-population ratios in states where it has been implemented.

Julian Fraser, Member of Yale College Democrats: Julian told his personal story of growing up in Georgia where his mother had medical problems but seldom took time off which made her condition worsen. Georgia did not offer paid sick days. Paid medical leave would mean the difference between a long healthy life and a worn out retirement. It would improve the lives of employees and their families and allow for adjustments to sudden family emergencies.

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, it 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: She testified about her own experiences when she gave birth to her first child and the difficulty she and her husband faced. 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: Ms. Gardner said she is in a unique position to address this bill because she had two battles with breast cancer. The first time she had paid leave and 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.

Jillian Gilchrest, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, Inc., Member: 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): 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.

Karen A. Grava, President, American Association of University Women: Although it will require bond funds initially, once it is up and running it will eventually be both cost and revenue neutral. Since funded by employee premiums of approximately one-half of one percent of weekly earnings, it is a small price for each of us to pay for this important benefit.

Lauren Gray, Bridgeport Resident: She testified the benefits of this bill make sense. FMLA isn’t working for too many working families, 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.

Sally Grossman, Windsor Resident: Ms. Grossman told of complications with her first pregnancy and how she, as a self-employed painting contractor in the construction industry, 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, MomsRising Org.: Khadija 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.

Christina Hagerty, Planned Parenthood, Intern: A senior at Eastern CT. State University, Christina spent the last five years studying Early Childhood Education and Child Development. She is looking forward to becoming a mother, but sees a direct conflict with her career. The first months of a baby's life are critical for its well-being. It is wrong that women are penalized for wanting what is best for their baby. This is a disservice for the mother as well as the children.

Liz Halla-Mattingly, New Britain Resident: 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. It is time for CT to do better for its working families.

Katharine Hamilton Moser, Farmington Resident: She testified she did have access to paid family leave when she had a child. However, had she not been able to stay home with her newborn and recover from the exhaustion following giving birth, 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.

Oona O. Holahan, Member, Yale College Democrats: Ms. Holahan is originally from Los Angeles, California where there is Paid Family Leave. This bill is not just a moral and ethical choice, but also an economically sound one. It would provide security to employees, reduce bankruptcy and increase a person's likelihood to return to their jobs.

Patrice L. Holiday, Windsor Resident: This bill would give CT families options and help people with jobs not offering paid leave. This bill would provide a sense of security for families to take care of themselves during their difficult times.

Dr. Valerie Horsley, Co-founder, Action Together Connecticut: Although she is a professor at Yale University, she testified as a private citizen. She defined clinical compression, which occurs when clinical duties are missed when someone takes family leave. This practice forces pressure for 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.

Paula Kavathas, Professor of Laboratory Medicine, Yale School of Medicine: As 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: As demographics continue to shift, more families are facing the challenges of caring for aging relatives. While family caregiving can be a rewarding experience, the caregivers often face challenges that leave them overwhelmed, anxious and/or intimidated by their duties. Financial strain is one of these challenges.

Julie Kushner, Director, UAW, Region 9A: The need for paid family and medical leave is just a reality of the times. The FMLA, which was passed decades ago, is unrealistic for too many workers who cannot afford to lose pay, and inaccessible for 40% of the workforce who work for a small employer.

Jessica Labrencis, Attorney, West Hartford Resident, Self: 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. She lived in California for eight years while her husband served in the US Navy so she was fortunate to participate in California's paid family and medical leave system. CT. workers should have these same opportunities.

Ned Lamont: 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: Ms. Lang said she was testifying not for herself today, but for herself in the future. She expressed 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 were cared for by her son. 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 their financial stability. If this bill were passed, not only would families be able to build wealth, but employers 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.

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 from month to month and face impossible choices when life events happen. This bill would alleviate these situations.

Tina Manus, Stratford Resident: As a state employee and teacher, she said she now has excellent benefits and the opportunity to earn paid time off for illnesses. While caring for her elderly parents, she was the major breadwinner and did not have these benefits. She testified on behalf all the women she has worked with who are still in this situation.

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

Zev Mayer, Member, Yale College Democrats: His testimony said this bill would give individuals the essential right and ability to take time off in emergencies or unusual circumstances without financial repercussions. It increases the likelihood employees will return to their work and leads to a more financially stable CT. It significantly reduces the risk of bankruptcy.

Tara McDonough, Wallingford Resident: A graduate student at UConn School of Social Work, her testimony told of the difficulty her parent faces when her 7-year old brother developed 3 non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. She feels it is essential to expand the definition of family to include a broader spectrum of family relations for paid medical leave to include different family structures like LGBTQ partnerships, or families where a grandparent, sibling or blood relative is the primary caretaker.

Deborah McKenna, Attorney, Connecticut Employment Lawyers' Association: In their practice, they represent countless employees who would benefit greatly from the ability to take a paid family or medical leave. By failing to provide employees with reasonable time off to care for themselves or loved ones, it is more difficult to be productive and their work performance is affected. Creating this fund will expand the protection of the CT FMLA and benefit employees as well as employers by allowing them to remain competitive with neighboring states.

Rick Melita, Director, Service Employees International Union, CT State Council: In written testimony, he stated, "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, and workers and families deserve them.

Carlos Moreno, CT Director, Working Families Organization: In his testimony, he said CT has to address the need for paid leave in any serious, comprehensive agenda to close the pay gap. Too many families are just a couple of paychecks away from being unable to pay their bills in a sudden medical crisis or when 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: Ms. Morfi's testimony told of her personal experiences when caring for her terminally ill father. As caregiver, and as a human being, 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 had to play 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.

Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, Norwalk Resident: Her experiences after giving birth have made her even more passionate about the need for paid family leave for everyone. 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 help retain employees in whom 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: Lori said 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 their health / caregiving responsibilities. It would improve worker retention, save turnover costs, increase worker productivity, improve employee loyalty and boost morale.

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in Connecticut, Inc. Submitted testimony of support noting that 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 those who don't take advantage of it because they can't afford to miss a paycheck.

Ioann Popov, New Haven Resident, Yale College Democrats, Self: Her testimony recognized the fact that the committee would hear the same thing over and over again, so she told a delightful story of a conversation with a senior citizen in her church. Being separated by several generations, it "contained a lot of nodding on one end and a lot of proffered advice on the other". Although it was a rather mundane conversation, there was one exceptional bit of advice: drop out of Yale and move to Russia and pursue education there. The rationale great paid family leaves programs and raising a family there would be so much better! The point is: Russia has family leave and Connecticut doesn't. This woman placed more value in paid family leave than in residing in the United States. This assigned more value than access to political and personal freedoms. Being an American citizen and raising a family comfortably should not be incompatible.

Sarah Prager, Wallingford Resident: Ms. Prager's testimony told of the struggle she and her wife had after the birth of their daughter. With a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree, no

paid leave was available to her. She is a published author, public speaker and marketing consultant. 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.

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: Ms. Resch is upset because a very small minority of the population is in a situation where they are able to take unpaid family leave. 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: Ms. Sexton's testimony told of two different scenarios. She had surgery on her right knee and received her usual salary and benefits because she has accrued sufficient paid sick leave. Around the same time, a friend of hers, the 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 has to treat their citizens better than this! 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 both protections and resources for such increased costs in all current and future contracts and grants. Nonprofits that contract 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 CT: Her testimony compared paid leave with the old TV show "Queen for a Day" where the woman telling the most upsetting/heartbreaking story won the prize. Pediatricians recommend 12 weeks as the minimum amount of time needed to physically recover from childbirth. Both moms and dads need the same amount of time to bond with the baby and ensure a healthy emotional beginning for parents and child. No one can afford time off without worrying about paying bills and buying food for their family. This also affects the other end of the spectrum with the average nursing home costing an average of \$186,000/year. Most seniors would prefer to age in place with support from family and friends. Also, in the middle- of- the- road age category, are people who will experience life-threatening illnesses themselves. In other words, we ALL will fall into one category or another in the course of our lives. Feeling valued, employees have increased morale and increase productivity. This is a win-win for all.

Suzanne Bates, Policy Director, Yankee Institute for Public Policy: Although the motivation for this bill is understandable, it is not the time or way to bring paid family leave to the state. CT had the slowest job growth in the country over the past 25 years and adding another mandate, especially to small businesses, would be counterproductive. At a time

when the state is cutting services because of difficult fiscal conditions, the government should not expand the number of services it provides. It would hurt the state's competitiveness and lead to greater difficulties for the same people the bill aims to help.

Kari A. Swanson, North Haven CT Resident: Ms. Swanson, a faculty member at Southern Connecticut State University, 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, recover from serious illness or injury, or to take care of an ill family member or dying loved one. Employers benefit because qualified workers would be retained and the expenses involved in recruiting and retraining replacements would be avoided.

Paige Swanson, New Haven Resident, Member of Yale College Democrats: At some point in their lives, nearly everyone will either themselves or have a family member who will require time off work due to unexpected medical circumstances. These uncontrollable circumstances should not be allowed to derail a person's life due to the financial burden it creates. Through the creation of a dedicated fund to provide compensation, countless individuals and families would be able to successfully bounce-back.

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 Thomason, 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 the humanistic need of employees.

Arvia Walker, Public Policy and Strategic Engagement Specialist, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England: 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 for 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: Mr. Weldon offered detailed information he felt would help CT make a decision and how to implement this bill if it should pass. 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 would be happy to if help or if there were any questions.

Molly Weston Williamson, Staff Attorney, A Better Balance: After repeating many issues submitted in other testimony, Ms. Williamson said 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 enough 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 the federal government has failed to take appropriate action on the issue. Connecticut must act.

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 they have the opportunity to take time off and still have their jobs protected when re-entering the workforce. Guaranteeing a living wages and equal pay is critical.

Ben Zhou, Member of Yale College Democrats, New Haven Resident: Originally from New Jersey where there is Family Leave Insurance, he supports this bill and sees it as

a win-win for employees and employers. Without Family Leave Insurance, many small businesses were unable to offer any form of maternity leave or similar benefits due to high costs. This made it difficult for them to compete with larger companies for the best employees. This insurance eliminates this obstacle.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Eric Gjede, CBIA, Counsel: CBIA supports employers that voluntarily adopt paid family and medical leave programs, but are opposed to this type of inflexible and unsustainable state mandate. Operating a business in CT is often costlier than running the same business in other states. Each additional mandate represents a cost separation between CT and other states that is not good for business. A 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.

Lumber Dealers Association of Connecticut: Although not in opposition of the intent of this bill, they submitted testimony in opposition 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 continue to support their employees, however, if CT continues to adopt mandates that make it harder and more expensive to do business in the state, it will cause difficulties for hiring.

National Federation of Independent Business: 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.

Wayne Pesce, President, CT Food Association: They oppose this bill because it will most necessitate the hiring of potentially hundreds of new state employees to administer. (Federal restriction prohibits current DOL employees from doing so). It would require small businesses to continue to provide expensive non-wage benefits to an employee absent for up to 3 months every year. It is an unnecessary one-size-fits-all program that has an unknown cost, although an identical program in Washington State was abandoned after it was projected to cost \$325 million per biennium.

Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce & Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce: Written testimony was submitted by Joann Ryan and Peter J. Prunty, presidents of their respective Chambers of Commerce. The One- half- of- one percent is inadequate to pay for the program. There should be greater deductions from workers' pay to adequately fund and administer the program. There is a cost to employers who would have to continue to pay three months of benefits associated with leaves to hire replacement workers. This concept has failed in other state. It would be expensive and impractical since taxpayers would have to pay substantial expenses for this well-intentioned by flawed proposal.

