

My name is Ayana and I am the mother of two children ages 10 and 6 and a resident of Windsor, CT.

While I was an employee of the State of Connecticut I was on maternity leave with our two children, 4 ½ years apart. Both maternity leaves were essentially without pay. I was told that with our first, if I went over my allotted, sick time and vacation time, I would go without pay but I could fill out FMLA paperwork and be assured that my job would be waiting for me upon my return. So, I still had a job, great, however I was not going to be paid until I returned. Going without pay for 8+ weeks each pregnancy and then paying for day care upon my return was taxing and stressful for me and my family.

Knowing I could not accrue enough time (as most doctor's appointments for my second pregnancy being a high risk pregnancy especially are during work hours). Not only did I have to take time off for doctor appointments, blood work appointments, etc. which chipped away at my dwindling sick time, that I had to protect in order to be paid for a couple week of my maternity leave.

Something must be done. I, myself will not be having more children. However, I think about all working women who do have children and then are unpaid while being home with them to heal and even more time must be taken with cesarean sections is outrageous. How does anyone expect for someone to be able to afford that? Whether or not you have a two person household, it is very difficult to keep up when you cannot work and there is nothing in place to assure that households can keep afloat in the meantime.

I am very much in favor of any system put in place where people elect choose to pay into an extra source of income for that time. It will be a sense of comfort to know that while you are out of work to take care of loved ones or a new born that funds will still be able to come to take care of bills.

It is important that this is supported and enacted. It is long overdue. Thank you for hearing my story.