

Anderson, Bryan

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To: LABTestimony
Subject: Paid Family Leave

From: Dr. Candace R. Benyei, Whimsy Brook Farm. Ltd, 29 Giles Hill Rd, Redding, CT 06896 and The Schulhof Animal Hospital, LLC, 199 Post Rd West, Westport, CT 06880

Paid Family Leave is an interesting concept. In Sweden these benefits are paid by deductions from the Employees' salaries, NOT paid by the Employer. Sweden has a significant social support system. However, in 1967, the year I was married (and yes I am still working three jobs at 73) the ordinary tax rate was 50% and that did not include the Value Added Tax which on cars was 200 %. Gas was also \$5.00/gal in Sweden in 1967 while it was \$.29/gal in the US. Fortunately Sweden like most Scandinavian and European countries has excellent mass transportation.

Under Democratic management, CT has a history of behaving as if businesses are somehow bad and should be punished (especially by Unemployment and EEOC), should support the entire State, and have unlimited funds to do so. I speak for two small businesses, a Farm and an Animal Hospital. Farming is hard work 365 days a year, and does not exactly have a large profit margin. The Farm nearly got wiped out during the Recession. We can no longer take on untrained High School AG-Tech interns because in addition to teaching them everything from soup to nuts, including the difference between a tablespoon and a teaspoon and how to convert decimals to fractions (farming is NOT unskilled labor), we have to pay them minimum wage. We CHARGE clients \$99/hr to teach them the same stuff! The Animal Hospital still has not recovered from the Recession, and now, 13 years down the road, its gross is still less than in 2006 while salaries, taxes, utilities, and materials have all increased significantly. There is a limit as to what someone can afford to pay to fix their dog or cat!

We treat our employees well. They all make more than minimum wage and get regular raises. They have excellent working conditions. They get paid continuing education. They have significant benefits, including paid vacations. Since this State is functionally at full employment, if our employees didn't like working for us they could go somewhere else. **But if CT really wants to shut down and/or drive out the businesses that have not yet left CT, passing this legislation, along with a \$15 /hr minimum wage should accomplish it.**