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GARY JONES, President



BEVERLEY BRAKEMAN  
DIRECTOR  
REGION 9A UAW  
111 SOUTH ROAD  
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032-2560  
PHONE: (860) 674-0143  
FAX: (860) 674-1164  
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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

RAY CURRY, Secretary-Treasurer

February 14, 2019 Public Hearing  
Labor and Public Employees Committee  
Testimony Presented by Beverley Brakeman, Director, UAW Region 9A

Testimony in SUPPORT of:

- S.B. No. 1 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE.
- H.B. No. 5003 (COMM) AN ACT IMPLEMENTING A PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM.
- Proposed S.B. No. 765 AN ACT ENSURING FAIR AND EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

Dear Senator Kushner, Senator Miner, Representative Porter, Representative Polletta, Vice-Chairs and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

Good afternoon. My name is Beverley Brakeman and I am the UAW Region 9A Director, which represents over 8,000 active and retired United Auto Workers members living and working in Connecticut. I am here to express my support for S.B. 1: AN ACT CONCERNING PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE, H.B. 5003: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING A PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM, and Proposed S.B. 765: AN ACT ENSURING FAIR AND EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

**Paid Family and Medical Leave**

The strong need for paid family and medical leave is a reality. No one should be worried about their income or job loss when they are caring for a new baby, a seriously ill family member, or themselves. FMLA, which was passed decades ago, is unrealistic for too many workers who are either ineligible or cannot afford to lose pay. Currently, only 17% of workers, including only 6% of low-wage workers, have access to paid leave through their employer.

Connecticut is at a competitive disadvantage if we delay the implementation of paid family and medical leave. Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey have passed and implemented successful paid leave programs. Massachusetts passed paid leave in July 2018 and similar legislation is pending in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. We must pass paid leave in order to attract and retain workers in Connecticut.

**Pay Equity**

In Connecticut, women are paid on average 83 cents to every dollar paid to their white male counterpart and the numbers are worse for minority women. The money lost by Connecticut women working full time could be used to support their families and put back into our local economy. Although we have made strides in countering this problem by enacting legislation prohibiting employers from using a worker's past salary information, we must go further to decrease the gender wage gap by ensuring all employees receive fair and equal pay for equal work.

I strongly support S.B. 1, H.B. 5003 and proposed S.B. 765. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote favorably this year to make paid family and medical leave a reality for all Connecticut workers and to ensure that all employees are paid fairly and equally. Doing so will only make this state an even better place to live and raise our families.

Thank you for your time.

Beverley Brakeman

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