

**Testimony of
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Senate Bill 1: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave and House Bill 5003: An Act Implementing a Paid Family and Medical Leave Program.

Dear Members of Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Mary Consoli, I live in Danbury CT. I am writing in support of both Senate Bill 1: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave and House Bill 5003: An Act Implementing a Paid Family and Medical Leave Program.

I gave birth to two children and was able to take six months off with each child because I was a member of the Danbury Nurses' Union and had a contract which allowed me to stay home. I was able to bond with each child and establish a breast feeding regimen which gave each child the best start in life because each child had multiple allergies. In addition during this six months each child had multiple ear infections which required surgical intervention to put tubes into their ears to prevent their ear drums from bursting which would have resulted in hearing loss. I did not have to choose between my children or my job.

In addition, without my contractual benefit of FMLA I would not have been able to care for my husband when he had to be hospitalized for kidney stones, or my daughter when she required surgery to remove her tonsils, recover from a fractured collar bone and her multiple episodes of Asthma Attacks.

With my FMLA I was paid and kept my job. I was able to return to my exact position with no loss of benefit time. This opportunity is not available to a worker who does not belong to a union. There are many female workers who are mothers and face similar circumstances. A mother should not have to choose between caring for her family or keeping her job and getting paid.

If Connecticut is to remain competitive in the job market to attract and retain workers, we need to pass legislature for FMLA. The surrounding States have such laws in place or have legislation pending. The proposed legislation, HB 5003, is rational and fiscally responsible. It will not have a long term impact on the State budget.

If workers are out due to their illness, the illness of a child or spouse or other family member for any length of time, they may have to resort to public assistance. This is not cost efficient for the State of Connecticut.

It is in the best interest of the worker, the employer, the State and most important the families to pass S.B. 1 and H.B. 5003. I ask you to support both of these Bills.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mary Consoli