

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

My name is Brian C. Cutler and I live in Mystic, Connecticut. I stand in support of S.B. 1: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave and H.B. 5003: An Act Implementing a Paid Family and Medical Leave Program.

Paid Family and Medical Leave is a program that is long overdue in this state. I am currently employed as an Associate Appeals Referee at the Connecticut Labor Department. I am also the Treasurer of AFSCME Local 269. In my 31 years of state service, I have seen countless individuals having to quit their jobs in order to take care of an ill family member or the birth of a child. Unfortunately, they cannot receive unemployment compensation benefits because they are unable to meet the availability requirements of the law. In many cases, these individuals have no where to go for financial help.

The ability to receive an income while out on FMLA is equally good for employers and workers. Employers benefit by having a valuable employees return to work without incurring expensive turnover costs. It also helps workers not fall behind on bills and medical expenses. It avoids families having to file for bankruptcy due to the loss of income which negatively impacts the economy.

As a state employee, I was provided with paid time off for the birth of my children and to provide care for each of my elderly parents. I believe all workers should have the same rights in similar circumstances.

This bill is not breaking new ground. Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey have passed and implemented successful paid leave programs. There is no reason why our great state cannot do the same.

I strongly support S.B. 1. 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.

Thank you for your time,
Brian C. Cutler