

CONNECTICUT ALLIANCE TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Support. Advocate. Prevent.

Testimony of Bethany Hamilton, Associate Director

Supporting 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

February 14, 2019

My name is Bethany Hamilton and I am the Associate Director of the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence. The Alliance is the state's leading voice to end sexual violence and coalition of community-based sexual assault crisis services centers. Our centers provide trauma-informed, victim-centered services to survivors of sexual violence and their support networks, which includes a myriad of relationships. Each year The Alliance provides comprehensive sexual assault services to thousands of children, adolescents, and adult survivors, and those numbers have only increased as our society continues to recognize the scope and impacts of sexual violence.

On behalf of our nine-member centers and the survivors that we serve, I want to thank you for the opportunity to share our unwavering 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. S.B. 1 will create and implement a comprehensive, statewide system of paid family and medical leave for workers who need to take time off to care for themselves and their families or to welcome new babies into their families. The passage of these policies can provide critical support to survivors of sexual violence whose lives are disrupted by trauma, and who may need to step away from work to seek medical interventions.

The Alliance supports policies and practices that create opportunities for the most vulnerable members of our communities to succeed. Due to racial and economic disparities, people of color are significantly more likely to have employers who do not provide paid leave and have fewer financial resources to rely on during a personal or familial medical issue. Similarly, LGBTQ people are more likely to experience health disparities and often have less access to financial and familial resources due to their identities, which leaves them susceptible to experiencing hardships when needing to leave work to care for themselves or their families.

As a member of the queer community, I urge you to support the Campaign for Paid Family Leave recommendations for an affordable, accessible, and sensible system of leave for all of Connecticut's workforce including an expanded definition of family. This inclusion will positively impact families like mine who often rely on the support of chosen family more than our biological families. All of Connecticut's workers deserve the opportunity to provide care for themselves and their loved ones, however, they may define their family. As my six-year-old told me when I recently talked to her about expanding the definition of family under Paid Family and Medical leave, it makes Connecticut a better place for all families not just ours.

I urge you to support 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today.

Bethany Hamilton

Beth@endsexualviolencect.org

Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence Member Centers

