



TESTIMONY OPPOSING SB 1 AN ACT CONCERNING PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

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Submitted by: Bryan Hurlburt, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

To the members of the Labor Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony opposing SB 1 AN ACT CONCERNING PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE.

The CT Farm Bureau Association is a private, non-profit, membership organization representing nearly 3,000 CT families dedicated to elevating the status of agriculture in our state through education, market promotion, and legislative advocacy. Agriculture in CT is made up of over 6000+ small businesses, contributing \$4 billion to CT's economy and employing 21,000, working 436,000 acres of land.

The clear majority of CT farms are small businesses, usually family operated, working in a difficult environment with many challenges outside of their control. A significant challenge that CT farmers face is that our cost of production per \$100 of goods is one of the highest in the nation. CT farmers face national competition for their products and the price competition translates to lower profit margins for these businesses.

CFBA has signed onto the coalition letter that the CT Business and Industry Association circulated. We echo the concerns raised in that letter as valid points that would significantly impact CT farmers.

Should this proposal move forward, CFBA requests an agriculture exemption. This would recognize the following points:

- many farm families already have a plan in place for family and/or medical leave plan that works for their business and employees;
- many farm employees are seasonal and therefore would be paying into a system for a benefit that they would not be able to use;
- that the cost of hiring a replacement worker for a seasonal position and then dismissing that employee to hire back the original employee is a major disruption to the farm operation with limited benefit to the newly displaced employee and during a limited crop season;
- payment of non-wage costs are significant in an already difficult agricultural economy

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this proposal.