



Testimony of
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Labor & Public Employees Committee
February 14th 2019
SB 1 & HB 5003

Good afternoon Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **SB 1 & HB 5003** on behalf of the over 900 affiliated local unions that represent more than 220,000 working men and women of the Connecticut AFL-CIO.

It comes as a shock to most Americans that the United States is the only developed country that does not provide paid leave to workers when a new child is born. Among industrialized nations, the United States stands alone in its failure to guarantee workers paid leave. In 2014, the International Labor Organization reviewed parental leave policies in 185 countries and territories, and found that all countries except two (the United States of America and Papua New Guinea) have laws mandating parental leave.¹ With no right to paid family medical leave, workers must rely on their employers to provide these benefits, but because they are expensive most employers do not voluntarily provide them.

For years now, the naysayers in this building have been saying that Connecticut has to be more competitive with our neighboring states in order to compete with them. Instituting a paid family medical leave program, which is funded by the **EMPLOYEE**, is a step in the right direction. Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey all have paid family medical leave as do other states in the country.

I'm sure you will hear from the business community that paid family medical leave will drive them out of business. The following research proves otherwise. Out of a diverse group of 18 New Jersey businesses that were asked about the state's paid family medical leave policy, which has been in place since 2009, the vast majority said it hasn't hurt their bottom lines, according to interviews conducted by researcher and journalist Sharon Lerner. In a California study, the Center for Economic and Policy Research did detailed surveys of employers and employees at 253 firms about the state's program,

¹ International Labor Organization. (2014). Maternity and Paternity at Work: Law and Practice Across the World

which has given workers up to six weeks of paid leave. By reducing turnover, paid family medical leave can be a real boon to employers. It has been found that those who got paid family leave were more likely to return to the same job afterward. Such an effect was estimated to save employers \$89 million in each year. Turnover is very costly it takes the equivalent of about 20 percent of an employee's salary to replace them.²

Paid Family Medical Leave has been proven that's it's a *win-win* for both the employee and the employer.

Paid Family Medical Leave can also help boost the economy. It's likely to keep people from leaving the labor force and can even help add more people to it. It also reduces the amount of time women spend out of the labor force by decreasing the chance that they'll have to quit their jobs for the birth of a new child. A quarter of women who have to take leave either quit or are let go, and paid family medical leave can reduce financial hardship for employees. Of those who get partial pay or no pay when they have to take leave, a third borrow money, dip into their savings or put off bills, while 15 percent **go on public assistance**. Women who get paid family medical leave, on the other hand, are much more likely to see their wages increase when they go back to work.³

We urge passage of **SB 1 & HB 5003** Thank you.

² Eileen Appelbaum and Ruth Milkman of the Center for Economic and Policy Research Think Progress

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