

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

My name is Anastasia Martineau and I live in Willimantic, 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*.

When I was born in Windham Hospital in 1998, my parents were overjoyed. They brought me back to their apartment in Willington CT, excited to begin our family. What they didn't expect was just how difficult that would become. While I was learning to talk, my parents were working multiple jobs in order to make sure I had proper care. My mom was able to take time off from one of her jobs to take care of me during the day, but still had to work nights in order to make sure we could pay our bills. This is not an uncommon situation for working families across Connecticut, the majority of whom cannot afford to take unpaid leave even if it is covered by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

If my parents *had* been able to access paid family leave, I would have been able to have more consistent, stress-free, and effective care from both of my parents. As someone who currently works in developmental psychology research at UConn, I can tell you that consistent care is crucial, and can lead to improved cognitive function and emotional intelligence that will follow the child throughout their school years and into adulthood.

I can only hope that I will not have to go through the same ordeal as my parents when I eventually have a child. As I begin my professional career, this is something I have been taking into consideration when looking into jobs and deciding where I want to live in the future. Paid leave currently exists in *all* of the states that surround Connecticut: Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. While I truly believe in our state and the opportunities it has to offer me, we need to be able to stay competitive by providing benefits like this one that will help workers like me to remain in Connecticut.

Not only does the issue of paid family leave affect my prospective career choices, but it also deeply affects my personal well-being. As someone who identifies within the LGBTQ community, I know that my future family will not look like the 'typical' heterosexual nuclear one. This being said, I am not fully out yet, and I honestly don't know who in my family will be there to support me and my own family when the time comes, as well as what kind of familial support my future partner will have. What I *can* say for sure is that I already have a wonderful chosen family support network, who I know I can rely on in the future when it comes to any family health issues. This is why it is necessary not only to pass paid family and medical leave, but to pass a version like this one with an inclusive definition of family that includes extended and chosen family members.

I strongly support S.B. 1 and H.B. 5003. I hope that the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote favorably this year to make paid family and medical leave a reality for all Connecticut workers, creating a better future for our state.

Thank you for your time,  
Anastasia Martineau  
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