

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

My name is Keely McMullin and I live in Fairfield, 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.

My partner, William, and I both work full-time. We both have family who helped us when we were younger to get where we are today, through college and the first few years after as we graduated into the recession. After working very hard to achieve financial stability for ourselves, we decided to start our family together, which meant we looked very carefully into what leave was available to us. William's company did not offer any paternity leave, and my company offered 6 weeks paid maternity leave (8 weeks if I was to have a cesarean section). My Paid Time Off would form the first part of the paid maternity leave, wiping out my vacation time & personal days, and all but 5 days of my sick time. I am lucky that I work for a company that would pay for the balance of those first six weeks.

Any other FMLA time off I took would be unpaid. We decided that William would take one week vacation after the baby was born to help out, and save the other week vacation in case we needed it after I went back to work and our son would start daycare in case of daycare closures (staff development, holidays, etc.), since the majority of my paid time off would be wiped out. We carefully saved up enough financial reserves so that I could take an additional 5 weeks (so 11 weeks total) to stay home after the birth of our son without facing any financial struggles from those missing paychecks of mine. We were lucky because everything went to plan. My son was born healthy, I was healthy, and we found childcare that would care for him so young.

I work for March of Dimes, the leading organization in maternal and child health. This gives me a unique window into our community, and I have sadly seen that I am indeed lucky. One in four women will experience having a baby born too soon. Meaning twenty-five percent of moms right here in Connecticut will have to face the traumatizing situation of having their fragile baby in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit or facing a medical emergency themselves. When we don't have support systems like Paid Family Leave in place, that means that in the middle of crisis both parents must decide just how long they can financially justify staying by their newborn's bedside. No one should have to choose between being there for their child & keeping their bills paid.

Paid Family Leave does not just support growing families, but ALL families facing medical crisis. Last year, my healthy, active, strong little boy suddenly got sick and within a week was diagnosed with Type One Diabetes at just 13 months old. He was so sick the doctors said he should have been comatose. After a 4 day long hospital stay, and another week home for his follow up appointments and to figure out how to manage his care (which now included a daily regimen of at least 6 shots of insulin and 10 finger pricks to test his blood glucose, monitoring his food intake and re-learning food in terms of how many carbs each item contained), I had once again used up all of my Paid Time Off.

Despite Type One Diabetes being covered under ADA law, it would take me three months to find him a new daycare that was willing to take on his diabetes. We were denied by fourteen (14) daycares. With his insulin, he is a totally normal, amazing kid and can participate fully, but daycares were scared off by his shots. Although I thankfully had the FMLA unpaid time so that I could keep my job, the medical bills and particularly two and a half months of no paycheck was a major financial hit for us. I can't imagine how devastating that would be to a family who isn't dual income,

or is living paycheck to paycheck, or relies on more than one part time job to pay their bills. Our longtime savings for our dream of owning our own home was nearly wiped out.

FMLA doesn't work for most working families.

- The majority of workers are either ineligible or cannot afford to take unpaid leave provided by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- Just 17% workers - including just 6% of low-wage workers - have access to paid leave through their employer.

Paid leave benefits Connecticut's economy and businesses.

- Without paid leave, workers fall behind on bills and medical expenses, and are more likely to file for bankruptcy, which negatively impacts the economy.
- Paid leave improves worker retention and saves employers' expensive turnover costs.
- This legislation doesn't require employers to contribute, reducing current burden on companies
- After more than 10 years of paid leave in California, employers overwhelmingly report positive or neutral impact on their business.

[Click here for additional components of S.B. 1 and H.B. 5003](#) or visit [www.paidfamilyleavect.org](http://www.paidfamilyleavect.org) for additional resources.

I strongly support S.B. 1. We need to help families who are trying so hard to stabilize their finances still. 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,  
Keely McMullin, William Ewert, and our son Calvin, age 2