



# Connecticut

Testimony of Kathy Null in SUPPORT of  
SB 1 *An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave* and  
HB 5003 *An Act Implementing a Paid Family Medical Leave Program*  
Labor and Public Employees Committee  
February 14, 2019

Dear Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Kathy Null, and I am an AARP volunteer from Bridgewater. I would like to express my support for 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*).

I am here because I have come to realize that at some point in the not distant future I may need caregiving help from a family member, one of my sons. As an AARP volunteer I have learned of many resources available to seniors in Connecticut. I have also learned from families I meet as a volunteer with a nursing home of the struggles they have encountered. Most importantly what I have learned is that whether you know the resources or not, the caregiver will need time off from work to find the best resources and implement them for their family member.

In March of 2018, I had total hip replacement surgery. The surgery is set up such that the patient is admitted, operated on that day, and is discharged either the following morning or the next morning as Medicare only allows two (2) days total in the hospital post surgery for hip replacement.

My oldest, married son took me to the hospital, stayed until after surgery, and brought me home on a Sunday morning. He stayed with me overnight and also that Monday, returning to work on Tuesday. I became aware while he was with me that his new boss had given him 'grief' about taking those two (2) days off, even though my son had requested the time off a month prior and has worked at this business for over ten years.

As independent as I think I am, I have to say the first week I was a nervous wreck alone at home. I had the VNA support staff visit three times as scheduled; otherwise I was on my own.

Over the years I have provided caregiving support to my mother-in-law and most of all, to my husband. Even when I was working, I had bosses who worked with me so that as I needed a few days here and there, I was able to use personal days, sick days and vacation days.

Yet, the business work place has dramatically changed for our adult children today. The so-called personal time is much more limited, and adult children can find themselves

under a lot of pressure between keeping a job and helping a loved one. Workers who take even limited amounts of leave to help family members may fear losing their jobs or facing other retribution.

This issue with taking time off from work was something I became more aware from another viewpoint a few years ago at a nursing home where I volunteered. A number of these residents did not get many visitors as their adult children did not live nearby. Then I started to meet family members of residents at this nursing home that was in the process of closing. From these family members I heard statements such as: "I couldn't get time off from work. The nursing home was the only option, I didn't know where to go for help. Now I wished I had never put my Mom here."

Providing this very much needed Paid Family and Medical Leave will actually do a number of positive things for Connecticut. As in the case above, having time off will allow a family member to get the right help and make sure the care is working for their loved one, and be assured their loved one is in a safe, comfortable environment – their home. It will save money with less people going into expensive nursing homes, eventually needing state aid; it will ease the pressure on working caregivers and make for better employees in the long run; and it will allow Connecticut to remain competitive by retaining workers and demonstrating Connecticut is a good place to live and work.

Again, thank you for your work. I strongly support S.B. 1 and H.B. 5003. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.