

February 14, 2019

Written Testimony in support of S.B. 1 and H.B. No. 5003 PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

All children require safe, nurturing, and enriching early experiences. Research shows that disadvantaged families are the least likely to have the economic and social resources to provide the early developmental experiences that every child needs.¹ If Connecticut is serious about reducing our achievement gap and wealth disparity, Paid Family and Medical Leave is a necessity. Paid leave for parents is important because it is morally right to allow ALL parents the opportunity to care for their children in their earliest days. It also is the right thing to do because it makes good economic and community sense as described below:

- The United States is the only industrialized nation that does not guarantee workers paid time off to provide care to a new child, and one of only a handful of these nations that does not provide paid leave for other types of family care.
- Among new mothers who had to quit their jobs to care for their newborn child, less than half—48.2 percent—returned to work within a year. This deprives lower-income families of much-needed funds and can deny working mothers and their children access to basic nutrition.
- Countries that allow for longer paid maternity leave typically enjoy lower child poverty rates, creating a richer, healthier environment for kids.
- New mothers experience improved mental and physical health when they're able to take paid time off.
- Parental leave results in better prenatal and postnatal care and strengthened parental bonding over a child's life. This time provides long-term benefits that improve a child's brain development, social development and overall well-being.
- The U.S. Department of Labor reports that paid paternity leave not only increases father engagement, but also promotes more equitable division of household and childcare within families, plus grants more employment opportunities for mothers.
- Access to leave allows parents to care for children with serious long-term or intermittent health care needs and parents perceive a positive impact of their leave on their child's health.²

Let's provide all children an equal opportunity for a best start by enacting Paid Family and Medical Leave now.

¹Heckman, James. (n.d.). The Heckman Equation. [Flyer] <http://www.heckmanequation.org/content/resource/heckman-equation-flyer>

² <https://paidfamilyleavect.org/new-babies/>

Sincerely,
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