

CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP

February 14th, 2019

LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR 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

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

My name is Ann Pratt, Director of Organizing for CT Citizen Action Group- a statewide organization committed to putting people first.

We strongly support 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.

S.B. 1 will create and implement a comprehensive, statewide system of paid family and medical leave for workers who need to take time off to care for themselves or a loved one, or welcome a new child.

It is incomprehensible that Connecticut has yet to pass this basic, common sense program for the families, children and elderly who reside in this state. 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.

The absence of paid family and medical leave disproportionately impacts communities of color- further exacerbating Connecticut's racial wealth and wage gaps. Access to paid parental leave can make a critical difference for Black woman who face a much higher rate of maternal mortality and complications from pregnancy.

The evidence is clear- paid family and medical leave will benefit workers, families AND our economy. Any argument claiming that this crucial benefit would hurt our economy, or the well-being of our businesses is nonsensical, particularly in light of the fact that after 10 years of paid leave in California, employers overwhelmingly report positive – or neutral- impact on their bottom lines. Finally, if Connecticut continues to reject instituting a *real* Paid Family and Medical Leave Program we will be at a distinct competitive disadvantage given we are surrounded by states that do provide this essential benefit to their workers.

We urge the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers to support S.B. 1 and H.B. 5003 so that our state will remain economically competitive and provide working families the support they deserve.

Thank you,
Ann Pratt, CCAG