



Trinity College

HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

February 12, 2019

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

My name is Sarah Raskin and I live in West Hartford, 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.

I have seen in my own life, and in the lives of those I work with, the hardship that is experienced when people have a child or must care for a loved one.

When my first child was born, my husband and I were not in a position where either of us could afford to take time off without pay. While the FMLA could have provided us with time off, we did not have the financial resources to go without income, especially with the added expenses of a new child. I teach at Trinity College and, at that time, my employer was willing to offer 6 weeks of paid parental leave. But the semester is 13 weeks long, so it was not possible to teach a college course for only half a semester. I was lucky, as a generous college offered to team-teach a course for me, allowing me to teach only the second half of the semester. With my baby born in mid-September, this meant I was back to work full-time four weeks after giving birth. Despite exhaustion, sleep-deprivation, nursing every two hours, and post-partum depression, I was one of the lucky ones. I could afford and access child care and had a supportive spouse. Even so, it was not a recipe for the most positive child-rearing or the critical bonding that is necessary for babies in their early months. I can only imagine how parents without my resources manage.

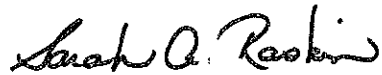
I am also a neuropsychologist and I work with people who have brain injury and other neurological disorders. I have seen countless families in desperate situations because they cannot take the time off needed to care for their loved ones when injured. Nobody should have to choose between having food on the table or shelter and caring for a child recovering from a serious injury. The first weeks after injury are crucial and a parent needs to be available to advocate, learn about their child's needs and provide hands on care. Given the gaps in our health care system, much of the day to day routine care falls on the family. And with shorter and shorter hospital stays, families only have those first

few weeks to learn everything they need to know to care for their child when the child returns to the home.

At the other end of the lifespan, we are living longer and longer. This means more people who will be alive but with significant care needs. Children who work full-time are often the one providing for those needs. And these caregivers must have the opportunity to take time when needed as a crisis or other event occurs.

This is a bipartisan issue that has the support of the majority of voters in our state. It touches everyone at one time or another in their lives. For these reasons, I strongly support S.B. 1 and H.B. 5003. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah A. Raskin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah A. Raskin, Ph.D.
Professor