



Connecticut

Testimony of Stacy Stableford In SUPPORT of SB 1 and HB 5003: *Paid Family and Medical Leave*
Labor Committee, February 14, 2019

Good day, Senators and Representatives of the Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly. My name is Stacy Stableford, and I am an AARP volunteer from Trumbull. Thank you for giving me the opportunity voice my SUPPORT for SB 1 (*An ACT Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave*) and HB 5003 (*An Act Implementing a Paid Family and Medical Leave Program*).

I have testified in front of the Committee twice before regarding this subject and I'm hoping this third time will be the charm, the year we will finally agree to help caregivers receive crucial financial support while they do the difficult job of seeing to the needs of loved ones. I was in that position several years ago, caring for my dad for 6 months before he died. My mom couldn't handle my increasingly sick and consequently more difficult father by herself and she and my dad didn't have the financial resources to hire help. I took time off from my job, unpaid except for 15 sick days, which would have been helpful had my father's illness only lasted a month. But six months is long siege and without any weekly compensation, my credit card debt skyrocketed and my small savings account disappeared. By the end of my dad's life, I was 30K in debt. If I had had PFML, I might have been in debt for only a fraction of that amount, and it would have been much easier to make a financial recovery. I realize I was lucky; at least I *had* a credit card and a savings account. What about those who have far less and are in urgent and extreme need of their salaries? How can anyone afford to be a loving caregiver and at the same time, worry about paying rent, bills and paying for food, all while facing the emotional and often physical distress of being a caregiver for a beloved child, parent, or other family member... or oneself?

I am now, once again, a full-time caregiver, this time for my mother. My circumstances have changed a bit; I am older, and although PFML would not help me now because I am retired, I might have had a more solid bank account today if I hadn't been so deeply in debt several years ago.

I ask for your support this time *not* for myself but for everyone who is now or will ever be in the position I was in 7 years ago. I could list all the data regarding percentages and costs, what pediatricians say about bonding with children, the burden on the state for institutional care...but you already know these facts. You also know that Connecticut is now fully surrounded by states that have instituted PFML, making us much less a desirable state in which to work and live for younger families, a demographic we sorely need to attract.

Newborns, adoptions, illness and cancer, accidents, or old age will touch each and every one of us at some point in our working lives. PFML provides financial protection for each and every working citizen who will become a caregiver, without adding any financial burden on the state. Let's finally get it done!

I am a staunch supporter of SB1 and HB 5003 because they enable us to be our human best. It's time for us to take care of our wage earners while they take care of others. Thank you, Committee Members, for your careful consideration of these bills and your efforts on behalf of all CT citizens.

Sincerely,
Stacy Stableford, AARP Volunteer, Trumbull