

**Testimony for Public Hearing
Labor and Public Employees Committee
February 16, 2017**

**Todd Szoka
Sunshine Cycle & Run
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**SB 1 An Act Creating a Paid Family and Medical Leave System in the State.
HB 6212 An Act Creating a Paid Family and Medical Leave System in the State.**

Chairs and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, I write in support of SB1 and HB 6212. I am a business owner, and have a bike and run store with three employees. I strongly believe that no one should lose their job or go without pay because of an unforeseen circumstance or caregiving responsibilities.

As a small business owner I can't afford to pay someone who isn't here once their allocation of paid time off (PTO) has been used up. The proposed paid leave would give my employees the time off that they need to deal with caregiving responsibilities, without causing them financial hardship.

Last year, one of my employees had to deal with the terminal illness and death of his mother. After using up all of his PTO, he had to take unpaid leave. I know that this caused him financial stress, but as a small business owner who had to find ways to cover his absence, I was unable to help.

When my child was born I was working as a full-time employee for another company. The only leave I could afford to take was two weeks of accrued PTO. Having access to the kind of paid leave proposed in these bills would be transformative. As a father I would have been able to spend more time at home with my child during the critical first few weeks of life. We had to rely heavily on family visiting from overseas to help us. I would have liked instead to be there to look after my own child and family.

As a parent and as a business owner I urge you to pass a bill bringing paid family leave to my workers and my family.