



Testimony of AARP Connecticut in **Support of SB 7,**  
**An Act Concerning Connecticut Paid Sick Days**  
Labor Committee Public Hearing, February 22, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, Ranking Members, and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with nearly 38 million members nationwide and 600,000 here in Connecticut. We advocate on behalf of issues that are important to older adults and their loved ones, and we appreciate the opportunity to share our support for SB 7.

In March of 2023, AARP released “Valuing the Invaluable: 2023 Update,” which examines the role of family caregivers in our nation’s long-term services and supports system and estimates the economic value of family caregivers’ unpaid contributions. Nationwide, an estimated 38 million family caregivers provide care worth \$600 billion each year; in Connecticut, we have an estimated 420,000 family caregivers providing unpaid care that would be valued at approximately \$7.2 billion if it were compensated.<sup>1</sup>

This report is relevant to SB 7 because having access to workplace flexibility is critical for the 60% of family caregivers who juggle work and caregiving responsibilities. Connecticut’s current paid sick law does not include workers who work at a small business with fewer than 50 employees, those in jobs that do not meet the statutory definition of “service worker,” part-time workers or those with multiple jobs, and workers who provide care for loved ones other than a child or spouse. SB 7 would allow all workers, regardless of employer size or industry, to have access to paid sick days to care either for themselves or for family members.

The expanded definition of “family member” in Section 1 of the bill would allow more caregivers to use paid sick days to care for ill or injured family members. Only 12% of unpaid caregivers who care for an adult loved one care for a spouse, and 6% care for an adult child with disabilities or serious illness – currently the only two types of family members who are covered under the state’s paid sick law. While SB 7, as written, would make paid leave available to more types of caregiving relationships, we note that it could be improved by having a definition of “family member” that aligns with the one used in Connecticut’s Paid Family and Medical Leave law. Using the same definition – “a spouse, sibling, son or daughter, grandparent, grandchild or parent, or an individual related to the employee by blood or affinity whose close association the employee shows to be the equivalent of those family relationships” – is more inclusive of members of the LGBTQ+ community and others with chosen family, and it would decrease confusion amongst family caregivers who may be trying to navigate multiple workplace benefits as they care for their loved one.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2023/3/valuing-the-invaluable-2023-update.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00082.006.pdf>

Using this definition of “family member” would expand access to paid sick leave to the 50% of caregivers who care for a parent or parent-in-law, the 8% who care for a grandparent or grandparent-in-law, the 7% who care for a sibling or sibling-in-law, the 6% who care for another relative, and some of the 10% that care for a close non-relative.<sup>2</sup>

Workplace protections for family caregivers are important for retired adults who may rely on care from their working loved ones as well as older adults who wish to remain in the workforce. Despite age discrimination laws, older adults disproportionately face discrimination in the workplace. If they lose a job due to caregiving responsibilities, they generally have a more difficult time reentering the workforce than younger workers. Extended periods of unemployment make it even more challenging for older jobseekers to find reemployment and ultimately increase the likelihood that they will drop out of the labor force altogether, which can have devastating consequences for an individual’s financial security later in life. Access to paid sick days allows employed family caregivers to better meet the needs of both their loved ones and their employers, and it helps them remain in the workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support and suggestions related to SB 7.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/full-report-caregiving-in-the-united-states-01-21.pdf>