



**Connecticut Conference
United Church of Christ**

125 Sherman Street
Hartford, CT 06105-2281

**Testimony in Support of S.B. 1 and H.B. 5003:
An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave
Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate
Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ
February 12, 2019**

Dear Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, and I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 1 and House Bill 5003: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave, to establish a paid family and medical leave system in Connecticut.

I am writing on behalf of the 233 congregations and more than 67,000 people in our state's churches. In fact, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. Nationally, the UCC has more than 5,700 congregations with nearly 1 million members. In 1988, the assembled delegates and ministers of the Connecticut Conference met and voted on a Resolution on Workplace and Family Life. That Resolution encourages public policy such as medical and leave benefits.

While the passage of the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was positive in the early 90's, it's not working for most employees. Seventy-eight percent of those eligible for FMLA don't take it because they can't afford to lose pay and many employees are not even eligible for this unpaid leave because their employer does not meet the size requirements. When employees have access to paid family & medical leave, they are happier and more productive in the workplace. The system that is being suggested would be fully funded by employees with no employer contribution.

Massachusetts, California, Rhode Island, Washington, New York, and New Jersey offer paid family leave and several other states such as Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine are considering legislation. As a state and country that supports family values, we should be doing more for our workers.¹

Connecticut workers need an inclusive paid family and medical leave system that would allow time to care for extended family and loved ones who don't share biological or legal ties. An inclusive definition of family is critical to LGBTQ workers, working caregivers, individuals that live alone, unmarried couples and workers with disabilities.²

The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ therefore urges the Labor and Public Employees Committee to support Senate Bill 1 and House Bill 5003: An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave which would expand the current family and medical leave system and provide paid time off for such leave. People deserve access to paid time off if they are seriously ill, having a baby or taking care of a family member. We do not think workers should have to choose between their health or the health of a family member, and their jobs.

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of House Bill 5003 and Senate Bill 1.

Blessings,
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¹ CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave
² CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave



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God is still speaking,

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