



Testimony Supporting

S.B. 1: An Act Concerning Earned Family and Medical Leave

H.B. 5387: An Act Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave

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Senator Gomes, Senator Miner, Representative Porter, Representative Bocchino, and Esteemed Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

We are testifying today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based child advocacy organization working to ensure that all Connecticut children have an equitable opportunity to achieve their full potential. **We are testifying in support of S.B. 1: An Act Concerning Earned Family and Medical Leave and H.B. 5387: An Act Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave.** We applaud the Committee for raising S.B. 1 and H.B. 5387, which will help families develop strong and healthy relationships, will help ease the burden on low-income families by allowing them care for their children or other family members, and will help develop a healthier and more productive work force in the state.

Paid Family Leave is Smart Policy for the Growth and Development of Infants and Newly Adopted Children.

Family medical leave enables parents to spend crucial time with their newly born infant or newly adopted children. Research shows that paid parental leave leads to a host of positive life outcomes for both generations, including decreased infant mortality,¹ decreased child behavioral problems,² increased rates of breastfeeding duration,³ decreased rates of maternal post-partum depression,⁴ decreased rates of parental conflict,⁵ and increased rates of father involvement through childhood.⁶ Bonds formed in the first twelve weeks of a child's life are critical for the long-term success of the child. Children begin building vital brain architecture from the time they are born, developing language and vocabulary skills, hand-eye coordination, and motor coordination.⁷ The child-parent relationships during this time also lay the foundation for all other close relationships the child will encounter throughout the lifespan.⁸ By giving parents time to develop high-quality, secure attachments with their new child, family medical leave plays an important role in nurturing healthy child development in the long-term.

Paid Family and Medical Leave is a Smart Two-Generation Approach to Improving Family Well-Being.

Paid Family and Medical Leave is a smart two-generation strategy that takes into account the fact that children do well when families do well. Often, workers lacking paid family and medical leave hold low-income and/or multiple part-time jobs, and so cannot afford to take time off.⁹ Of workers who took time off with reduced or no pay, 15 percent went on public assistance, 30

percent borrowed money, 36 percent put off paying bills, and 31 percent cut their leave short.¹⁰ Thirty percent reported that making ends meet while on medical leave was “very difficult,” and another 32 percent reported it was “somewhat difficult.”¹¹ Only three percent of men exercise Family Medical Leave Act rights for paternity reasons because they could not afford to take unpaid time off work when their wives were also taking unpaid time off work.¹² By giving these parents the opportunity to take off work to care for their child without loss of employment or wages, family medical leave strengthens families’ economic stability. The Two-Generation Policy Workgroup recommends supporting family leave policies, in recognition that the family is a single unit whose needs must be addressed in tandem.¹³ Furthermore, wider access to paid medical leave could contribute to reducing the health disparities faced by mothers and infants of color in Connecticut.¹⁴

Paid Family and Medical Leave is a Smart Policy to Improve the Connecticut Workforce.

Paid Family Medical Leave is also a smart way for the businesses in Connecticut to improve their work forces. Paid Family and Medical Leave can help level the status and wage gap between working men and working women because it allows wives to go back to work sooner.¹⁵ Research shows that access to paid family and medical leave results in workers taking better care of their health, taking fewer risks,¹⁶ taking fewer and shorter sick leaves throughout the course of their careers, and having less inpatient care.¹⁷ Finally, companies and states with paid family and medical leave both attracts a millennial workforce¹⁸ and keeps them working in positions longer.¹⁹ Paid family and medical leave is a smart investment to attract a talented young workforce to the state, and companies will follow.²⁰

¹ Christopher Ruhm, "Parental Leave and Child Health," The National Bureau of Economic Research (May 1998), available at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w6554>.

² Lawrence Berger, et al, "Maternity Leave, early maternal employment, and child health development in the US," The Economic Journal (January 2005), available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.0013-0133.2005.00971.x/pdf>.

³ Michael Baker and Kevin Milligan, "Maternal employment, breastfeeding, and health: Evidence from maternity leave mandates," Journal of Health Economics (June 2008), available at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0167629608000131>.

⁴ Janet Shibley Hyde, et al, "Maternity Leave and Women's Mental Health," Psychology of Women Quarterly (July 2006), available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1995.tb00291.x/abstrac>.

⁵ Kotsadam, A., & Finseraas, H. (2011). The state intervenes in the battle of the sexes: Causal effects of paternity leave. *Social Science Research*, 40, pp. 1611-1622.

⁶ Rege, M., & Solli, I.F. (2010). The impact of paternity leave on long-term father involvement. *CESifo Working Paper #3130: Labour Markets*.

⁷ Paula Wiggins, "Infant Brain Development," Texas Child Care (Spring 2000), available at http://www.childcarequarterly.com/pdf/spring00_braindev.pdf.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Liz Ben-Ishai, "In Focus: Sick Days and Family Medical Leave," CLASP (February 2015), available at <http://www.clasp.org/issues/work-life-and-job-quality/in-focus?topic=sick-days-and-family-medical-leave>.

¹⁰ Jacob Klerman, Kelly Daley, and Alyssa Pozniak, "Family and Medical Leave in 2012: Technical Report," US Department of Labor, (updated February 4, 2013), available at <http://www.dol.gov/edgekey.net/asp/evaluation/fmla/FMLATEchnicalReport.pdf>, 106

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Halverson, C. (2003). From here to paternity: Why men are not taking paternity leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act. *Wisconsin Women's Law Journal*, 18, pp. 257-279.

¹³ Elaine Zimmermann, "A Two Generational Approach: Helping Children Work and Parents Thrive," Two Generation Policy Workgroup (December 2014), available at http://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/PDFs/two-gen/2015-02-03_report_FINAL.pdf.

¹⁴ Jou, J., Kozhimannil, K. B., Abraham, J. M., Blewett, L. A., & McGovern, P. M. (2018). Paid Maternity Leave in the United States: Associations with Maternal and Infant Health. *Maternal and child health journal*, 22(2), 216-225.

¹⁵ Gíslason, I.V. (2007). Parental leave in Iceland bringing the fathers in: Developments in the wake of new legislation in 2000. *Center for Gender Equality & Ministry of Social Affairs*.

¹⁶ Månsson, A., & Lundin, A. (2010). How do masculinity, paternity leave, and mortality associate?: A study of fathers in the Swedish parental and child cohort of 1988/89. *Social Science and Medicine*, 71, pp. 576-583.

¹⁷ Mänsdotter, A., & Lundin, A. (2010). How do masculinity, paternity leave, and mortality associate?: A study of fathers in the Swedish parental and child cohort of 1988/89. *Social Science and Medicine*, 71, pp. 576-583.

¹⁸ Elmer, Vickie. "Issue: Work–Life Balance Work–Life Balance." *Business Researcher* (2017).

¹⁹ Campione, Wendy A. "Corporate Offerings: Why Aren't Millennials Staying?." *The Journal of Applied Business and Economics* 17.4 (2015).

²⁰ Pete Saunders, "The Demographics Behind GE's HQ Move to Boston: Young Talent is on the Move," *Forbes* (19 April 2016), available at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/petesauanders1/2016/04/19/businesss-goes-where-talent-flows/#5f2675955d63>.