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PCSW SUPPORTS PAID SICK LEAVE BILL

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HARTFORD – The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), a non-partisan public policy and research arm of the General Assembly, Wednesday came out in support of a bill which would require employers of 50 or more employees to provide paid sick leave to their employees for an employee's or the employee's child's sickness.

In testimony before the Labor and Public Employees Committee, the PCSW endorsed passage of **S.B. 63, An Act Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees**, saying:

“Women and families are disproportionately affected by the lack of paid sick leave, in large part because most women remain the main caregivers of their families. Throughout their lifespan, women may care for, in addition to themselves, a child *in utero*, children and/or their elderly parents. If a woman needs to take a sick day for herself or a dependent family member but lacks paid leave, her options are limited: take unpaid leave and possibly risk her economic well-being or neglect her own health and/or the health of her loved ones.

“Seventy-one percent of mothers with children under age 18 are in the workforce.¹ Working women are significantly more likely than men to take time off from work to care for a sick child. In the case of an urgently sick child, almost 78% of women take time off from work, while just 26.5% of men take off.² Studies show that men tend put work first, and women adapt their work around the family, including both their children's and husband's work schedules.³ Therefore working mothers greatly benefit from workplace reforms that support balancing work and family.

¹ Families and Work Institute, *Times Are Changing: Gender and Generation at Work and at Home*, 2009
<http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/Times_Are_Changing.pdf>

² The American Association of Psychotherapy, *Working Women More Likely Than Men to Stay Home With a Sick Child*, Spring 2008
<<http://www.annalsofpsychotherapy.com/articles/spring08.php?topic=article5>>

³ The American Association of Psychotherapy, *Working Women More Likely Than Men to Stay Home With a Sick Child*, Spring 2008
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“An emerging challenge, that will only increase in urgency as the baby boomer generation ages, is the rising number of working women who find themselves caring for both minor children and aging parents. This unique population has been coined “the sandwich generation.” Women represent more than two-thirds of adults providing substantial assistance to elderly parents.⁴ In addition, women belonging to the sandwich generation provide an annual average of \$1,521 in financial support to elderly parents and spend 23 hours a week (1,210 hours a year) on average providing care to elderly parents.⁵ The need for paid sick leave will only increase as the sandwich generation continues to rise in numbers.

“While paid sick days are important for women as caregivers, this reform is also essential in protecting women’s economic stability. As the earnings of women in the workforce have increased, so has their contribution to family income. In 2008, employed women in dual-earner couples contributed an average of 44% of annual family income.⁶ Therefore, without paid sick leave, the loss of a working mother’s income could have a detrimental effect on her family’s economic well-being.

“Lastly, women in Connecticut comprise the majority of career fields that have the ability to easily spread disease.⁷ These workers may be disproportionately affected by taking unpaid sick leave because their salaries are typically lower, making their income even more vital to their financial security.

- Healthcare Support Occupations: 87% Women
- Health Technologist and Technicians: 81% Women
- Personal Care and Service Occupations: 74.9% Women
- Education, Training and Library Occupations: 74% Women
- Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations: 54% Women

The PCSW believes paid sick leave is an essential workplace reform that will help working women balance both their careers and their families without risking their economic well-being.”

About the PCSW: The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women was formed in 1973 under Sec. 46a of the Connecticut General Statutes to study “all matters concerning women, and in furtherance of that responsibility shall: (a) inform leaders of business, education, State and local governments and the communications media of the nature and scope of the problem of sex discrimination, with a view to enlisting their support in working toward improvement; (b) serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with services for women; (c) promote consideration of qualified women for all levels of government positions; (d) oversee coordination and assess programs and practices in all State agencies as they affect women.”

⁴ Richard W. Johnson and Joshua M. Wiener, “A Profile of Frail Older Americans and Their Caregivers,” Urban Institute, The Retirement Project Occasional Paper Number 8, February 2006 Table

⁵ Charles R. Pierret, “The ‘sandwich generation’: women caring for parents and children,” *Monthly Labor Review*, September 2006, Table 2.

⁶ Families and Work Institute, *Times Are Changing: Gender and Generation at Work and at Home*, 2009
<http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/Times_Are_Changing.pdf>

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder 2008-2008 Estimates, Connecticut Civilian Employed Population Over 16 Years of Age, Sex by Industry