



Legislative Testimony  
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**Written Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 7, An Act Concerning  
Connecticut Paid Sick Days Statutes and Senate Bill 12, An Act  
Modernizing the Paid Sick Days Statutes**

Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, Ranking Members Sampson and Ackert,  
and members of the Labor and Employment Committee:

My name is Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am writing to testify in support of Senate Bill 7, An Act Concerning Connecticut Paid Sick Days Statutes and Senate Bill 12, An Act Modernizing the Paid Sick Days Statutes.

The ACLU-CT believes in a society where all people have equal opportunity to contribute to society and build successful and fulfilling lives. This includes ensuring that no person should have to choose between their health, or their family's health, and their livelihood. Workers are not guaranteed even a single paid day off under federal law, and many other workers do not even receive protections for unpaid time off.<sup>1</sup>

In 2011, Connecticut was the first state to pass a bill that required employers to provide paid sick days, but it excludes employers with fewer than 50 employees and only requires 40 hours of paid sick days. The law also does not cover federal employees, certain employees of manufacturers and nonprofit organizations, and temporary or day laborers. Our paid sick days are defined quite narrowly: paid sick time may only be used to care for a child eighteen or under and narrowly defines

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Molly Weston Williamson, *The State of Paid Family and Medical Leave in the U.S. in 2024*, CTR. AM. PROGRESS (2024), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-state-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave-in-the-u-s-in-2024/>.

“spouse” as “husband or wife.” At the same time, our paid sick day laws have less inclusive definitions of family when compared to our paid sick leave laws, leaving behind LGBTQ+ people, single people, and adults without children, and more. These bills on paid sick days must be amended to mirror the family definitions established in our paid family medical leave statutes. Current law also narrowly defines “serious health condition” as one that requires “inpatient care or continuing treatment,” which requires an overnight stay in a hospital, hospice, or a residential medical care facility. This limited legal standard leaves out many kinds of illnesses, like food poisoning or the flu. Although Connecticut was the first state to enact paid sick days, we have a long way to go in modernizing our statutes.

Expansive paid sick leave is a racial, gender, and economic justice issue, in addition to being a crucial public health policy. Workers of color, especially Black women, are overrepresented in the kinds of jobs that do not offer paid sick days, like the service industry.<sup>2</sup> Comprehensive paid sick days are critical for the people of Connecticut. Senate Bill 7 and Senate Bill 12 are attempts to close the gaps in our state’s paid sick day laws. The ACLU-CT supports these bills, and urges this Committee to do the same.

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Ann P. Bartel, et al., *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Access To and Use of Paid Family and Medical Leave: Evidence from Four Nationally Representative Datasets*, NAT’L LAB. REV. (Jan. 2019), <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-access-to-and-use-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave.htm>.