

Connecticut General Assembly



PCSW

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

The State's leading force for women's equality

News
Release

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For Release March 10, 2016

Women in Leadership Urge Passage of Paid Family and Medical Leave

More than 100 influential women from across the state support legislation.

HARTFORD – More than 100 influential female decision-makers from across the state have signed a letter urging Governor Dannel Malloy and the General Assembly to pass Paid Family and Medical Leave legislation this session. The group comprises women who represent a wide array of careers and endeavors, including state government, municipalities, labor, business, philanthropy, law, medicine, education, ministry, and community service.

The full transcript of the letter is as follows:

March 9, 2016

To Governor Malloy and the Connecticut Legislature:

With the 2016 Connecticut legislative session in full swing, over 100 women in leadership across the state are speaking with one voice: it's time for paid family leave.

We represent clergy, businesses, unions, organizations, voters, and taxpayers across the state, and we stand with them in support of the creation of a comprehensive, statewide paid family and medical leave system. In order to attract and keep a skilled workforce in our state we must seek innovative policies to help Connecticut remain competitive. Paid family leave will not only attract workers and businesses into the state, but also create an environment that retains and supports the next generation.

In addition to supporting a healthy business climate, paid family leave is one of the most important economic and health issues for women across the United States and here in Connecticut. In over 70% of married couple families with children under the age of 18 in our state, both spouses are in the workforce. We know that women still remain the primary caretakers for both our parents and children. This means that without paid family leave, too many women are forced to leave their jobs to take care of new children, while others return to work too soon after having a baby and long before it is healthy and advisable to do so. It also means that any time someone else in the family – our spouse, our child, or our parent – gets sick and needs care, we will likely be the ones sacrificing our jobs and giving up our pay to be there to care for them.

We know that the current lack of paid leave is unsustainable; it drives women out of the workforce, contributes sorely to pay inequality, and decreases a woman's lifetime earnings.

Connecticut has an opportunity to be a leader on this critical issue. Other states, including California, Rhode Island and New Jersey have successfully implemented paid family leave programs years ago, and states like New York, Massachusetts, and others are moving in the same direction. As one of the first states in the country to pass an unpaid Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) we should continue to lead the nation by becoming the next state to create a system of paid family and medical leave. As we look for policy solutions this year to breathe life into Connecticut's economy, attract and retain younger families and workers, and bring stability to our families, paid family leave is a necessity.

Women are driving Connecticut's economy forward – we, and the families we love, should not have to endure another year without paid family leave.

It is signed by the following elected Congressional and State officials:

Rosa DeLauro, U.S. Representative, CT-03; Elizabeth H. Esty, U.S. Representative, CT-05; Denise Merrill, Secretary of the State; Beth Bye, State Senator; Terry Gerratana, State Senator; Mae Flexer, State Senator; Marilyn Moore, State Senator; Cathy Osten, State Senator; Linda Gentile, State Representative and Deputy Speaker of the House; Susan Johnson, State Representative; Kelly Luxenberg, State Representative; Mary Mushinsky, State Representative; Robyn Porter, State Representative; Kim Rose, State Representative; and Hilda Santiago, State Representative.

Municipal and town leaders who signed on are:

Toni Harp, Mayor, City of New Haven; Wildaliz Bermudez, Councilwoman, City of Hartford; Sauda Efa Baraka, Board of Education, City of Bridgeport; Jill Barry, Councilwoman, Town of Glastonbury; Heather Dean, Member, Representative Town Meeting, Fairfield; Hoween Flexer, Member, Board of Education, Killingly; Mary Fortier, Councilwoman, City of Bristol; Julia A. Haverl, Selectwoman, Town of Andover; Jennifer Hochberg, Member, Representative Town Meeting, Fairfield; Mary Lee A. Kiernan, Member, Town of Greenwich Board of Estimate and Taxation; Tina Marie Manus, Councilwoman, City of Stratford; Eloisa M. Melendez, Councilwoman, City of Norwalk; Mary Jo Nosal, Selectwoman, Town of Old Lyme; Lynne Ide, Councilwoman, Town of Windham; Holly Robinson, Board of Education, City of Danbury; Ruth Smey, Member, Representative Town Meeting, Fairfield; and Karen Wackerman, Member, Representative Town Meeting, Fairfield.

Other influential women (in alphabetical order) in fields ranging from law enforcement to advocacy to education include:

Pamela Allon, Founder, The Center for Postpartum Support, LLC; Ingrid Alvarez, Connecticut State Director, The Hispanic Federation; Amy Armstrong Clarke, Supervisor of Pupil Services and Special Education, Middletown Board of Education; Susan Barrett, Police Commissioner, Town of Fairfield; Erin Benham, President, Meriden Federation of Teachers; Amy R. Blackwood, Executive Director, John J. Driscoll United Labor Agency; Nancy Boone, Executive Director, Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs; Tammie Botelho, Vice President, Local 134L USW; Linda Braiely, Vice President, Waterford Federation of Classroom Teachers; Debra Bristol, Parent Educator, The Family Resource Center; Gloria Brown, Retired President, Connecticut Education Association; Marilyn Calderon, Executive Director, Connecticut Parent Power; and Laura Cordes, Executive Director, Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence.

Also: Elaine Davis, Member, Democratic Town Committee, Fairfield; Shellye M. Davis Divisional Vice President, MERA; Veronica DeLandro, Executive Director, Aurora Foundation for Women and Girls; Elisha M. De Jesus, Director of Athletics, Student Activities, Physical Education & Health, Middletown Public Schools; Amy Di Mauro, President, National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut; Shirley G. Dickes, Recording Secretary, District 26 & C.A.N.E.L. Lodge 700, Machinists Union; Nora Duncan, State Director, AARP Connecticut; Susan Eastwood, Commissioner, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women; Yolande Eldridge, Principal, Middletown Public Schools; and Judith Ewing, Member, Democratic Town Committee, Fairfield.

Also: Kate Farrar, Acting Executive Director, Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund; Adrienne Farrar Houel, President and CEO, Greater Bridgeport Community Enterprises; Joelle

Fishman, Chair, Connecticut Communist Party; Mary Jane Foster, Vice President, University Relations, University of Bridgeport; Lindsay Farrell, Executive Director, Connecticut Working Families; Patricia W. Fusco, Divisional Vice President, AFT Connecticut; Aurelia “Rory” Gale, Owner, Hartford Prints!; Susan Garcia Nofi, Executive Director, New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc.; Debra Greenwood, CEO and President, The Center for Family Justice; Donna Haghghat, Co-President, American Association of University Women, Connecticut Chapter; and Jan Hochadel, President, AFT-CT.

Also: Ruthann Horvay, Director, Winsted Family Resource Center; Wanda Howard, Vice President, United Steelworkers Local 12160; Karen Jarmoc, CEO, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Barbara Jo Warner, Executive Director, Capitol Child Development Center; Sharlene Kerelejza, Executive Director, Chrysalis Domestic Violence Services; Betty Kuehnell, Board Member, United Labor Agency; Julie Kushner, Director, UAW Region 9A; Amy Labas, Director of Athletics and Activities, Plainville Public Schools; Keri MacLean, ELA Language Arts Curriculum Supervisor, Middletown Public Schools; and Enza Macri, Associate Superintendent, Middletown Public Schools.

Also: Elizabeth Marafino, President, Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans; Colleen C. May, Vice President, Meriden Federation of Teachers; Gwen Mills, Political Director, UNITE HERE; Katie Montalbano, Vice President, C&M, CWAL Local 1298; Antonia Moran, Former Chair, and Commissioner, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women; Lucy Nolan, Executive Director, End Hunger CT!; Frances Padilla, President, Universal Healthcare Foundation of Connecticut; Fran Pastore, CEO, Women’s Business Development Council; and Janice Pawlak, President, Middletown Federation of Teachers.

Also: Lori Pelletier, President, CT AFL-CIO; Jennifer Phaiah, Math Curriculum Supervisor, Middletown Public Schools; Sarah Prager, Founder and Director, The Quistory Project; Kierstin Pupkowski, Community Affairs Director, WTNH; Fran Rabinowitz, Interim Superintendent, Bridgeport Public Schools; Nicole M. Rothgeb, President, Connecticut Employment Lawyers Association; Ellen Russell Beatty, Professor Emerita, Connecticut State University; Gina Sasso, Project Coordinator, Stanley Black & Decker Inc.; Martha H. Shoemaker, President, Waterford Federation of Classroom Teachers; Kathleen N. Skoczen, Ph.D., Ex-officio President, Shoreline League of Democratic Women; and Rose Stamilio, Principal, Qualitas Healthcare Consultant Services.

Also: Janet Stolfi Alfano, Executive Director, The Diaper Bank; Mary Stone, Member, Old Lyme Democratic Town Committee; Jennifer Straub, Principal, Frances T. Maloney High School; Judy Tabar, President and CEO, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England; Yanil Teron, Executive Director, Center for Latino Progress; Carolyn Treiss, Executive Director, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women; Sandra Treviño, Executive Director, Junta for Progressive Action; and Deborah Ullman, CEO, YWCA Hartford Region.

Also: Cindy Wolfe Boynton, President, National Organization for Women, Connecticut Chapter; Michele L. Vancour, Chair, Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition; Jennifer Vendetti, Vice President, Postpartum Support International, Connecticut Chapter; Vicki Veltri, Healthcare Advocate, Office of the Healthcare Advocate; Colleen M. Weiner, Principal, Middletown High School; Mary X. Yordon, President, Norwalk Federation of Teachers; and Suzanne Zahner, Principal, Spencer School.

About the PCSW: The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women was formed in 1973 under Sec. 46a-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes to study and improve Connecticut women’s economic security, health and safety; to promote consideration of qualified women to leadership positions and to work toward the elimination of gender discrimination. As a non-partisan arm of the General Assembly, the agency monitors, critiques and recommends changes to legislation in order to inform public policy, and assesses programs and practices in all State agencies for their effect on the state’s women. The PCSW serves as a liaison between government and its diverse constituents, and convenes stakeholders, including the business, non-profit and educational communities, local governments, and the media, in order to promote awareness of women’s issues.