**To**: Interested Parties

**From**: BLS Research & Consulting LLC

**RE**: Small Business Owners Survey—Paid Family Leave

**Date**: May 24, 2017

Recent survey results indicate small business owners (SBOs) in Connecticut solidly support the paid family and medical leave legislation currently being considered in the Connecticut General Assembly. Support increases further once SBOs learn more about paid family and medical leave and the benefits these programs can bring to businesses, like increased retention, job satisfaction, productivity, and morale.

Highlights:

* 95% of CT SBOs believe it is important for people to have time off to care for a new baby, a seriously ill family member, or recover from a personal illness, and 69% feel it is very important.
* More than 3 in 4 CT SBOs support the paid family and medical leave legislation, and nearly half (46%) feel that way strongly. Support holds across the state and among different industries.
* Once SBOs learn more about paid family leave, including how research has demonstrated its benefits for businesses, support climbs to 82%.

When asked why they support or oppose paid family leave, SBOs tend to mention the importance of putting family first and the belief that allowing employees time off for family would make then more productive:

*“I think it's been extremely important to allow employees the opportunities to spend time with their family during these periods when it’s so urgent to be available. It's great to come up with some ideas to not further burden already struggling small businesses and allowing needs to be met in this way. Great to see out of the box strategies.”* –Medical/Healthcare Industry SBO, Middlesex County

*“I support it because it's important for employees to balance work and life. And as long as its employee funded I'm willing to sacrifice not having them at work during those 12 weeks.”* –Professional Services Industry SBO, New Haven County

*“We need to be considerate of human needs in this world. Work and money can wait.” –*Real Estate Industry SBO, Hartford County

*“Because I understand the need for paid medical leave for employees, but as a small business owner it puts a great burden on such a business. This sounds like a good solution that is mutually beneficial to all parties.”* –Manufacturing Industry SBO, Litchfield County

*“Sometimes, family members get sick and need care. Family is very important and businesses should respect that. A happy employee is a productive employee.”* –Educational Industry SBO, Fairfield County

In conclusion, SBOs solidly support paid family leave and easily understand that such programs benefit businesses in the long run and make good business sense.

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For questions about this survey, please contact Brittany L. Stalsburg by e-mail (Brittany.stalsburg@gmail.com) or phone (860.227.3875).

For questions about the Campaign for Paid Family Leave campaign, please contact Catherine Bailey by e-mail (cbailey@cwealf.org) or phone (860.247.6090).

**Methodology**

On behalf of the CT Campaign for Paid Family Leave, BLS Research & Consulting conducted an online survey of 243 small business owners (2-250 employees) in Connecticut. About 82% of business owners surveyed employ less than 25 people.

The survey fielded May 17-May 23, 2017. The margin of error is +/- 6%.

Respondents were recruited via online panels and from commercial lists of small businesses in Connecticut. The sample includes a broad mix of small business owners from several industries—from manufacturing and construction to educational services and the medical/healthcare industry. Woman- and minority-owned small businesses are also represented.

**Survey Results**

In your opinion, how important is it for people to have access to some paid time off if they need to care for a new baby, a seriously ill family member, or recover from a personal illness?

Very important 69%

Somewhat important 26

Not too important 4

Not important at all 1

Important 95%

Not Important 5

As you may know, the Connecticut General Assembly is considering a plan called PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE. This plan would allow employees to take up to 12 weeks of paid time off from work if they need to care for a new baby, a seriously ill family member, or recover from a personal illness. This plan would be solely funded by employees through small payroll deductions.

Generally speaking, do you FAVOR or OPPOSE this plan to establish Paid Family and Medical Leave?

Strongly favor 46%

Somewhat favor 31

Somewhat oppose 13

Strongly oppose 11

Favor 77%

Oppose 23

Here is some additional information about the paid family and medical leave plan:

The paid family and medical leave plan would be funded entirely through employee wage deductions, thereby eliminating the financial burden on business owners. Research shows that paid family and medical leave plans are good for businesses, because they increase employee retention, job satisfaction, productivity, and morale.

Now, do you FAVOR or OPPOSE this plan to establish Paid Family and Medical Leave?

Strongly favor 53%

Somewhat favor 30

Somewhat oppose 10

Strongly oppose 8

Favor 82%

Oppose 18

*Small Business Owner Characteristics*

Please indicate your gender.

Woman 41%

Man 58

Other 1

Please indicate your race.

White / Caucasian 85%

Black / African-American 3

Latino / Hispanic 4

Asian / Pacific Islander 3

Other race 1

Mixed race 2

Prefer not to say 3

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or something else?

Democrat 26%

Republican 30

Independent 33

Something else 3

Not sure / Prefer not to say 9

For how many years have you been the owner or business manager of your current business?

Less than one year 4%

One to five years 28

Six to ten years 22

Eleven to nineteen years 18

Twenty years or more 28

Is your business a member of any of the following organizations? (Percent Yes)

Chamber of Commerce 38%

Connecticut Business

 And Industry Association 17%

National Federation of

 Independent Business 10%

Finally, for statistical purposes only, which of these categories best describes the gross revenue of your business in 2016?

Less than $100,000 17%

$100,000 to under $250,000 20

$250,000 to under $500,000 17

$500,000 to under $1 million 15

$1 million to under $2 million 15

More than $2 million 9

Not sure / prefer not to say 7