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**Sent:** Tuesday, April 10, 2018 10:36 AM  
**To:** sirotkin.senate@gmail.com  
**Cc:** Kayla Dewey  
**Subject:** Written testimony for tonight's hearing

Hello Senator Sirotkin,

I am writing with written testimony for tonight's hearing on the Family and Medical Leave Insurance bill, as I am unable to attend. I appreciate that your committee is making the effort to hear from Vermonters about this important legislation.

Like many women my age with young families, I work full time. As a program manager for the state of Vermont, many people assume that I get great benefits, including paid family leave. That is simply not the case.

I am expecting my second child in September, and as with my first child, I will take about 12 weeks of unpaid leave. I will use up all of my sick leave, which will barely cover the out of pocket costs of my family's health insurance, and I will have no income. My husband, who works for a small private business, gets no paid leave either. If I'm lucky, he'll get a week off.

We have no family nearby who can help us, so the burden for care will fall mainly to me. I love being a mom, but the cost of becoming one is far too much to bear. Physically, mentally, emotionally and yes, financially, parenting in America has become nearly untenable. Women do the majority of care giving still: this is not what our foremothers imagined for us.

When my mother was sick and dying in 2011, my sister and I took countless unpaid days and weeks to care for her. I will never regret a second of that time, but it left me thousands of dollars in debt. The tragedy of my 56 year old mother dying was enough: why did I also have to suffer financially?

We must do better: Vermont can lead where others haven't as we have with many important issues. If we are serious about attracting families to live and work in Vermont, then I guarantee that this insurance will underscore that commitment. If people know that regardless of employer, both parents can have 6 weeks of paid leave when a child is born, that is a huge recruitment tool.

I also think this current bill reflects the bare minimum, and I urge you to consider restoring the bill to its original strength. 6 weeks is nothing: a baby is essentially in the 4th trimester until they are 12 weeks old, and they need to be home with their parents.

I am sure you will hear from many people tonight about how important this bill is, and you might hear from some who think there are other priorities, or that this will somehow cost employees too dearly. When America is one of only two countries in the world that doesn't offer paid family leave, it's time to take a stand. We all deserve better.

Thank you for taking my testimony,

Jessica Savage  
Burlington, VT