

Public Budget Hearing Testimony – Paid Leave

My name is Linda Bowden, I am a volunteer at AARP and heard that the paid family and medical leave bill was being considered by the senate.

I would like to tell you my story because I think it illustrates why there is a need for paid family and medical leave for Vermonters.

Several years ago, I got a call from a church member of my mom's who said that mom, who lived by herself in the state of Georgia, needed to go to the hospital as she was jaundiced. I was working full-time, my brother in Florida also was working full-time, and my sister, in Alabama, was a full-time caregiver for her husband who had had an aneurysm necessitating my sister to quit her job as a teacher.

I used vacation time to fly down to Georgia from Vermont to be with my mom for her operation and also sought out a rehab facility for when she was discharged. All of this on my work vacation time.

It was an extremely stressful and emotionally draining period in my life trying to balance work, flying back and forth, and caring for my mother in another state. Subsequently, my mother passed away, which meant more visits to plan her service and sell her home.

If I had had paid family and medical leave, I would have been able to take the time needed to get all of this organized and not have to be dealing with the pressures of work and caregiving.

As an active community member and AARP volunteer, I know that there are many other Vermonters who are in similar situations and are not as lucky as I was to have vacation time and the resources to travel as a caregiver for my mom. For this reason, I strongly support the H.66 Paid and Medical Family Leave bill and ask that you support it too.