

**Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development**  
**Testimony to Support SB 1130 & HB 3788**  
**AN ACT ESTABLISHING PAID SICK DAYS**  
**May 4, 2005**

Chairman Rodrigues, Chairman McGee and Members of the Joint Committee on Commerce and Labor. My name is Dr. Maureen Perry-Jenkins and I am a faculty member in the Psychology Department of the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I am unable to appear in person to testify today. However, I wanted to add my strong endorsement of the Paid Sick Days bill.

As you will see from the attached, through the Work and Family Transitions Project, we have followed the transition back to work for one hundred and fifty-three working class couples after the birth of their first child. The research confirms that a correlation exists between the practices of parents' work supervisors, in allowing flexibility to deal with family responsibilities, and parents' mental health. As the law currently stands, each supervisor, notwithstanding a company's "formal" policy of paid leave, has the discretion to allow or disallow leave in a random and discretionary manner. This often creates extreme hardship and tension for working parents who are torn between their loyalty to their employer, their fear of risking their jobs, and the needs of their children.

As Paid Sick Days legislation would require these supervisors to offer families paid sick days in a predictable and ascertainable manner, working parents could attend to their children's illness and well-baby appointments without the stress that is currently a large part of their working lives. Consequently, this legislation would have a profoundly positive effect on the lives of these families and countless others in the Commonwealth.

If you have any questions after reviewing my research, please do not hesitate to contact me at 413/545-0258. Thank you for kind and serious attention to this critical matter.