

**Testimony of Liz Hardin Strnad, AFSCME 3800 Member  
Board of Regents Public Forum on the University Budget  
Wednesday, June 5, 2013**

Hello, my name is Liz, and I am an Executive Office Specialist in the University Libraries. I would like to talk about the parental leave portion of our benefits.

As a union employee, I am only granted 2 weeks paid parental leave, while P&A and Faculty are granted 6 weeks paid parental leave. I recently had my son Bobby, and due to this policy, and my chronic health conditions that depleted my paid time off, I had to apply for short term disability and sick time donations from my co-workers to cover the time I was out past 2 weeks. Not everyone is lucky enough to qualify for these forms of assistance, nor is every pregnancy planned as mine was, or without complications that could use up sick time intended for parental leave after the baby arrives. In addition, using our sick time for parental leave leaves us without that time in the future for when we our or children become ill.

Most importantly, since no licensed daycare in Minnesota can accept an infant under the age of 6 weeks, employees that are only granted 2 weeks paid parental leave are forced to make the difficult choice of using weeks of sick time they may not have, taking a month of unpaid time off, or a combination of both. As the lowest paid workers on the University pay scale, this is an unreasonable position to put them in, especially as 6 weeks paid parental leave is a standard across both public and private sectors.

We all work equally hard and care equally as much for the University, its students, and its mission, and we should all have equal benefits when it comes to paid parental leave to care for our children, who in turn may become the next generation of University students, employees and faculty.

Thank you.