Dear:

As a practicing dentist and small business owner in the District of Columbia, I write to oppose BL21-0415, the current proposal for Universal Paid Leave Act of 2015.

Though I strongly support providing employees time off to care for an ill relative, an elderly parent or a newborn is a good thing, I have several concerns with the currently proposed legislation.

* There is a disparity in that private employers will have to provide 11 weeks of leave but the District government only provides its employees 8 weeks of leave.
* In the California paid leave bill there is a provision that allows only the primary caregiver to take leave, per qualifying event, for a family member. In the DC bill any and all can take leave to care for the same individual.
* There is no cap on the tax paid by employers even though there is a cap on benefits.
* There is no provision that suggests that this benefit should be a benefit of last resort meaning the employee should have to exhaust sick and safe and other benefits first.

As a dentist and small business owner, the costs associated with maintaining a dental practice in the District escalate each year. In addition to the high cost of real estate, utilities, and employee wages in the District, each dentist is required to pay numerous licensing and registration fees. These fees include their individual dental license, their US DEA Controlled Substance Registration, their DC Controlled Substance Drug Registration, their DC Property Tax, a DC DOH fee on each x-ray machine in their offices, payroll taxes and DC Worker’s Compensation Taxes. These taxes must all be paid before realizing any personal income.

By adding an additional payroll tax to fund this project, you will be increasing the costs on dental practices. These costs will be passed on to patients in the form of higher fees.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss my views with you and other members of the City Council.

Sincerely,