



**Connecticut
State Building
Trades**

**Testimony of the Connecticut State Building Trades
On SB560, AA Extending the Prevailing Wage to Certain
Construction Projects Receiving Public Financial Assistance
March 9, 2006**

The Connecticut State Building Trades unequivocally supports SB560. The DECD has given millions to companies to attract them to Connecticut, with the intention of creating new jobs for Connecticut residents. Some times this has been successful; sometimes it has been a total failure. We feel that by applying the prevailing wage law to these grants and low interest loans the investment will begin to pay off from the start of the process, the construction of the facility.

The prevailing wage law is the instrument by which over 60,000 Connecticut citizens sustain and grow the standard of living for themselves, their families, and their communities. These wages, which now go just to those who build our public buildings, our roads and our bridges, make critical contributions to the economy of our state and municipalities. These wages represent mortgage and tuition payments, purchases at local supermarkets and hardware stores, and contributions to churches, schools, and charities. These wages help drive the economics, which ensure that future state and local construction projects will be forthcoming.

The prevailing wage provides a critical path for the unemployed and economically-disenfranchised, including many women and minorities, to learn a skilled trade in the construction industry. At a time when many corporations that build in the state are importing workers at wages our local residents cannot afford to work for, the prevailing wage law helps to secure local construction jobs for the residents of our communities.

Failure to apply the prevailing wage law to DECD projects invites companies to bring in low cost out of state contractors to build facilities. These contractors import their own workforces, and provide little or no benefit to the Connecticut residents that are funding these loans. We feel that this is shortsighted and bad policy. There are documented instances of this occurring. Lowe's Warehouse in the eastern part of the state is a good example. Much of that was built by imported workers from other states, and

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countries. The businesses say that this will add cost to the projects, but there are also costs to the residents of the state that are imposed by not having the requirement. Costs like lowered wage standards, an increase in uninsured workers, safety violations, injuries and deaths.

Times change and so do the needs and economic realities of our state. However, the far reaching benefits the prevailing wage remains one continuing source of strength for the state of Connecticut, our municipalities, and the hardworking residents who call Connecticut home. At a time when the economies and quality of life for communities across the state are being challenged, we urge you expand a source of economic stability and quality of life for our citizens, our communities and our state – the prevailing wage law. We urge you to require companies asking for state aid to be good corporate citizens, not just use the state to enlarge their bottom line. We urge you to act favorably on SB 560

Thank you.