



Testimony of Lori J. Pelletier, Secretary-Treasurer, Connecticut AFL-CIO before the Judiciary Committee

March 14, 2007

Good Afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and the Members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Lori Pelletier and I serve as Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO. I am here on behalf of our 900 affiliated local unions from all across this great state who represent 211,000 working men and women, and I appreciate the opportunity to address this committee.

H.B. No. 7326 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CAPTIVE AUDIENCE MEETINGS.

We SUPPORT this legislation. Almost without limits, employers can force workers to attend captive-audience meetings on work time. Most often, these meetings include exhortations by top managers that are carefully scripted to fall within the wide latitude afforded employers under U.S. law—allowing "predictions" but not "threats" of workplace closings.

Employers today try to influence workers on a variety of issues which are non work related. For example who to vote for in an election, which religious beliefs to consider as well as other social issues such as joining a labor organization. Employers can fire workers for not attending these "captive" meetings. They can impose a "no questions or comments" rule, and discipline any worker who speaks up. These meetings are unfair and present lies and misrepresentations as the truth without the employee being afforded an alternative opinion.

An employer is welcome to hold staff meetings to discuss work issues, such as contacting your representative on an issue pertaining to the business. However, it would not be permissible to tell employees which representative to vote for. Finally an employee who chooses not to attend these "meetings" would be able return to their job.

This legislation provides workers with the protection they need from abusive employers. Employers who do not force their personal opinions regarding religion, political and social issues will not be subject to this legislation. We applaud responsible employers and are willing to work with the legislature on this important issue.

I want to thank this committee for holding this public hearing and if you have any questions I'd be glad to address them.

PRESIDENT

John W. Olsen

EXECUTIVE VICE

PRESIDENT

Salvatore Luciano

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Lori J. Pelletier

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Leo Canty

GENERAL VICE

PRESIDENT

Brian Petronella

VICE PRESIDENTS

John A. Altieri

Linda Armstrong

Tammie Botelho

Thomas Bruenn

Peggy Buchanan

Wayne J. Burgess

Peter S. Carozza, Jr.

Everett Corey

Ben Cozzi

Dik Days

Kenneth Delacruz

John Dirzius

Mark Espinosa

Bill Henderson

James Howell

Clarke King

Elizabeth Kuehnel

Thomas Ledoux

Mike Livingstone

Dwight Loines

Kevin Lynch

Steve Matthews

John McCarthy

Jeff Merrow

Jean Morningstar

Charles Page

Sharon M. Palmer

Steven Perruccio

Michael Petosa

Ronald Petronella

Robert Proto

Carmen Reyes

Robert Santo

Edward Sasso

Ray Soucy

Paul Wallace

Kurt Westby

Thomas Wilkinson