



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT**

**TESTIMONY OF LINDA J. YELMINI
DIRECTOR OF LABOR RELATIONS
BEFORE THE LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

March 3, 2009

Raised Bill No.6545; LCO No. 3806 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYEES and

Raised Bill No.921; LCO No. 3019 AN ACT CONCERNING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR STATE MANAGERS

Collective bargaining is the means whereby state employees can collectively negotiate terms and conditions of employment with their employer, the State of Connecticut. Managers who work in state agencies are the representatives of the employer. They are responsible to ensure that the rights of employees are upheld while the mission of each state agency is fulfilled.

The system of checks and balances, which is a cornerstone of government in this country, is similar to the system that exists with labor and management. One branch of government cannot merge with one of the other branches. Each branch of government has a different role and perspective to attempt to solve a problem. In most cases, problems are resolved through compromise. Labor and management disputes are handled in similar fashion. Management sits on one side of the table and labor sits on the other during negotiations, grievances, etc. In most cases, problems are resolved through compromise. Under this bill, the balance between labor and management would be permanently modified with the taxpayers, clients and other citizen groups being shortchanged.

If managers were allowed to collectively bargain an enormous conflict of interest would result. Management and labor would be on the same side of the table. Bureau heads could not be expected to manage entire agencies alone. Managers are typically responsible for possess the ultimate authority to hire and fire. If managers were allowed to become "brothers" with bargaining unit members, the demarcation lines would be blurred. In the name of labor solidarity, managers might have divided loyalties and work not for the benefit of the employer but the benefit of other bargaining unit members. Managers are responsible for developing the budgets within which other agency employees are expected to operate. Under this legislation, there would be no one to exercise the necessary oversight in limiting expenditures or forcing employees to operate within an established budgetary framework. Everyone, with the exception of a very limited few, would all have a common "self" interest.

In any employment dispute, labor would control since almost the entire hierarchy of an agency would be on the same side of the table. Management by definition cannot be unionized and this bill would upset the delicate balance between management and labor that has existed for a considerable period of time. When the legislature allowed lieutenants in the Department of Corrections to unionize, it did so by recognizing that they are supervisors and that excluding managers from collective bargaining is a sacrosanct element of good employee relations.

It is imperative, however, that the State treats its managers with the same respect given to its unionized workforce. The wage increases and benefits given should be comparable.