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February 24, 2009

Dear Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

My name is Paul J. Rapanault. I am the Director of Legislative and Political Affairs for the Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association of Connecticut. Our 4,000 members serve in 50 fire departments throughout the state.

I am addressing you today in **OPPOSITION** to **H.B. 804 AAC MUNICIPAL BINDING ARBITRATION**. Since the passage of binding arbitration, the system has proven itself to work. Why would a municipal employee organization contribute equally if the city or town rejects an arbitration decision? This bill is a thinly veiled disguise designed for the purpose of defraying the costs to the municipalities associated with rejecting an arbitrated settlement and in turn would make it **MORE LIKELY** that the municipality rejects decisions creating an unjust and costly burden on the employee group.

Fire fighters believe in the Binding Arbitration system, even though municipalities prevail the majority of the time in arbitrated cases. We are willing to abide by the decisions handed down by arbitrators and we think municipalities should also. We do not believe that any party should be able to reject an arbitrated award, a "second bite of the apple" so to speak.

Professional Fire Fighters urge your opposition to this radical change to the binding arbitration statute. Let it work as it was designed to.

In addition, we **SUPPORT S.B. 365 AAC CAPTIVE AUDIENCE MEETINGS** and **H.B. 6187 AAC MANDATING EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES**. The fairness of both of these bills is evident. Employers should not be able to threaten and harass employees just because they want to join a union and workers should not be forced to work ill or be kept from attending to loved ones who are injured or sick. Some legislation just makes sense. Both of these bills do.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul J. Rapanault', is written over a horizontal line.

Paul J Rapanault
Legislative/Political Affairs