



CONNECTICUT BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY OF
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CONNECTICUT BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
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LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Good day. My name is Peter Gioia. I am the VP & economist for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents over 10,000 firms, which employ about 700,000 women and men in Connecticut. Our membership consists of firms of all sizes and types, the vast majority of which are small businesses employing fewer than 50 people.

CBIA wishes to comment upon HB 5062, An Act Concerning Collective Bargaining, Pensions, and Health Care.

HB 5062

Now in these severe recessionary times more than ever, Connecticut's ability to manage its state and local government's budgets has a direct effect on our economy. The more effective and efficient that government is, the better our business climate will be, and the better Connecticut will be able to compete with other states to first keep and then bring in businesses and the jobs and revenue they generate. These jobs make the economy stronger and produce additional tax revenues that make it easier to pay for state and local programs and services.

CBIA supports most of the recommendations called for by the CCM to better manage these areas. In particular, CBIA encourages the committee to modify the legislation to:

- Change compulsory municipal and teachers binding arbitration to allow for contracts to return to negotiation after rejection by municipal legislative bodies.
- Insist that arbitrators not include a municipal “Rainy Day Fund” of at least 10% in determining municipalities’ ability to pay for new contracts.
- Reform arbitrator selection to a single neutral arbitrator randomly selected from a pool of neutral arbitrators
- Establish tighter firm timelines regarding binding arbitration
- Clarify the position of department head in negotiations so that existing department heads like assessors, P & Z directors, public works directors etc. do not join bargaining units.
- Allow municipalities more leeway in offering and structuring retirement options
- Allow municipalities more leeway and options for regional consolidation of services without collective bargaining interference
- Permit regional contracts for municipal workers.

In regards to healthcare and other savings we recommend the committee contact Mayor Bill Finch of Bridgeport. The Mayor has achieved significant savings, particularly in regards to employee health benefit costs. These efforts should be encouraged and replicated across the state. They will create real, sustainable savings far in excess of pooling type efforts.

We feel all these points will create a more streamlined municipal government providing needed services at less cost to the taxpayer.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.