



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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Testimony before the Labor and Public Employees Committee Thursday, February 25, 2010

Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the Labor and Public employees committee, my name is Lori Pelletier and I serve as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, which has over 900 affiliated local unions representing the working men and women from every one of our 169 cities and towns, and am here to testify in favor of the following bills.

S.B. No. 171 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAM.

We support this legislation. Unless you haven't been paying attention for the past year the healthcare system in this country is in need of some serious medicine. When Governor Rell made the tragic decision to cut the LPN program from the Vo-tech schools, she couldn't have been more short sighted. These are some of the most critically important jobs for the next twenty years, and if Connecticut is going to rebound in this tough economy it will be done on the backs of workers in these "middle skill" type jobs.

LPN's pay taxes, provide needed services and become important parts of our local communities. With healthcare jobs expecting to increase by 17% over the next decade why would anyone think it makes sense to cut this program. We applaud the Labor Committee for raising this bill and look forward to its passage. Connecticut families need it, Connecticut workers need it and that is certainly a win-win.

S.B. No. 63 AN ACT MANDATING EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES.

We, at the Connecticut AFL-CIO strongly believe workers need and deserve to be able to take a paid day off in the event of being sick. It is a fundamental right of a fair and just society and is good business practice. We also believe paid sick days should come from a worker's collective bargaining agreement and that all workers should have such an agreement that provides them fundamental quality of life benefits. Unfortunately, in America today, the deck is so stacked against worker's trying to join a union that we find ourselves coming to the legislature seeking enactment of a law to provide these benefits. We look forward to the day when all Connecticut workers have the right to form a union and when benefits such as this will not have to be legislated but instead will be negotiated as part of a collective bargaining agreement

Thank you to the Committee for holding this public hearing and if you have any question I'd be happy to address them.

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