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Healthcare  
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Testimony of  
Ole Kushner Hermanson

**HB 5460 An Act Concerning Captive Audience Meetings**

Labor and Public Employees Committee  
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My name is Ole Hermanson and I am an organizer. I help workers form their own unions. I am here to testify in support of HB 5460, An Act Concerning Captive Audience meetings. In my six years at AFT Connecticut I have worked on many organizing campaigns. Most of them have been at non-profit organizations, mostly hospitals. I have never worked a campaign in the last six years where the employer did not use an anti-union campaign that included captive audience meetings. Management uses these meetings to coerce and intimidate workers.

Two years ago nurses at Rockville General Hospital were working to form a union. Management held mandatory captive audience meetings in every department. In the Emergency Department the manager singled out one nurse and said "If Michelle, here, asks you to sign a union card she isn't your friend and if she pressures you, you have the right to say "no" to her and tell me about it." Michelle asked why she was being singled out and the manager said, "Well you went to a union meeting, didn't you?" Michelle stopped coming to union meetings or taking calls from organizers and she told her coworkers that she is afraid that if she does anything to support organizing that she will lose her job.

Currently, the nurses at Backus Hospital in Norwich are joining together to form a union. The hospital has reacted by hiring a union buster. We know captive audience meetings are soon to come. We have done our best to prepare the nurses for what is coming but we know that when the hospital starts the meetings it will be very hard for the nurses to continue to exercise their legal right to form a union.

Captive audience meetings are a powerful tool that management uses to pressure people not to exercise their legal right to make their own decisions about joining a union and they should be stopped.

