



**Connecticut Restaurant Association Testimony
Before the Labor & Public Employees Committee
February 1, 2011**

HB 5460 An Act Concerning Captive Audience Meetings

The Connecticut Restaurant Association represents over 600 restaurants and hospitality industry businesses across Connecticut. The Connecticut Restaurant Association supports government initiatives that help create a strong business climate, create new jobs, promote a vibrant state economy, and restrict government interference in the daily conduct of our businesses. We believe that lower taxes, pro-business legislation and reasonable regulations support our businesses' ability to prosper and make Connecticut more desirable for future business growth.

The CRA opposes ~~HB 5460~~ An Act Concerning Captive Audience Meetings. Captive Audience legislation essentially prevents employers from discussing "political" matters with their employees. The term "political" is broadly defined and as drafted, would include a prohibition on communications about social and community events. In a restaurant atmosphere, these topics are often discussed between employer and employee.

Small business owners, such as restaurateurs and their employees, might discuss politics, religion or other issues with their customers and/or vendors within their business environment. This legislation would prevent those discussions and would therefore, have an adverse impact. Restaurateurs would also be prohibited from discussing matters of legislation or government regulation that might affect their business and/or the employment of their employees, with those employees. This would force those employees to obtain this information outside the workplace.

Furthermore, the Connecticut Restaurant Association believes that HB 5460 conflicts with the National Labor Relations Act, which regulates employer-employee communications. The NLRA aims to "insure to both the employers and labor organization full freedom to express their views to employees on labor matters." *National Labor Relations Act, Section 8(c)*. HB 5460 is pre-empted by the NLRA, and the NLRB, which exists to administer this law.

For the above reasons, we urge the Committee to reject HB 5460.

Thank you for your consideration.