



**Testimony**  
**Robin Wilson**  
**President & CEO**  
**Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce**  
**Before the Labor Committee**  
**February 10 2011**

**HB-5460, AN ACT CONCERNING CAPTIVE AUDIENCE MEETINGS**

The Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce *opposes* **HB-5460**, which will prohibit employers from requiring employees to attend meetings with their employers to discuss political or religious issues.

Many companies have mandatory staff meetings where issues affecting the workplace are discussed. Because government imposes and considers numerous laws and regulations affecting the workplace, many issues affecting employees are political in nature – health insurance benefits, wage and hour issues, government contracting, base closings, medical leave, etc.

Employees have a tremendous stake in understanding how these policies may impact their job and their future. By informing employees about the impact of proposed policies on their job, employers are engaging employees in an important dialogue that will enable them to respond to such policies with sensitivity and knowledge. A good example of this is the effort to save Connecticut's sub base.

Recognizing this, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), outlines how employers may communicate with their employees. Regarding employer speech, section 8(c) of the NLRA states: "The expressing of any views, argument, or opinion, or the dissemination thereof, whether in written, printed, graphic, or visual form, shall not constitute or be evidence of an unfair labor practice under any of the provisions of this act, if such expression contains no threat of reprisal or force or promise of benefit."

Moreover, although the NLRA does not have an express preemption provision, courts have found preemption when a state attempts to regulate (1) activities the NLRA arguably protects or prohibits, in order to prevent conflict between state regulation and Congress' integrated scheme of regulation or (2) areas left to the control of the free play of economic forces, which protects against unsettling the balance of interests set by the NLRA. According to a report by the legislature's Office of Legislative Research (OLR), "...it appears likely that, based on the history of the NLRA and court rulings, that the NLRA would preempt the bill's provisions as they relate to labor organizing."

***We therefore urge you to reject HB-5460.***