

**Testimony on Raised Committee Bill 1087 An Act Implementing the
Recommendations of the Program Review and Investigations Committee
Concerning Whistleblower Complaints**

Senators Fonfara, Cassano, Coleman, Kissel , Guglielmo, and Markley and
Representatives Mushinsky, Becker, Urban , Rowe, Giuliano and Noujaim
Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on this important legislation .
I am Peggy Beckett-Rinker, Executive Director of the University of Connecticut
Professional Employees Association a union representing nearly 1,700 non-
teaching professional employees at the University of Connecticut Storrs Campus,
the regional campuses, the Law School and the School of Social Work.

UCPEA supports Raise Committee Bill 1087 which amends the current
whistleblower statute and sincerely hope that it passes during this
Legislative session. We support the extension of the timelines for filing a
complaint for an employee to file a complaint with the Human Rights Referee
from sixty to ninety days when a personnel action has been taken or threatened
and the ability to amend the original complaint should an additional incident
happen.

We are also in favor of Section 1(b) which requires the Auditors of Public
Accounts and the Attorney General to develop a system to manage and assign
such complaints appropriately. We would like to see a time line by which this
task must be completed.

In section (d) (1) we support the requirement to keep the complainant informed as
to the outcome of the investigation of such complaint including whether the
matter has been rejected. And we support the requirement that when corrective
action is required but not taken, the Auditors of Public Accounts and the
Attorney General shall report non-compliance to the Governor. We believe that

failure to comply should result in severe penalties because when employees see that it is “business as usual” they will be less willing to file a complaint.

We would ask that the rebuttable presumption that a personnel action is in retaliation for the filing of a complaint be extended to three years after the employee first transmits facts and information concerning a matter under subsection (a) of this proposal.

Employees do not make complaints of corruption, waste, fraud, abuse or unethical behavior lightly. Many question whether or not they should come forward even when the behavior is blatant, for fear of reprisal. A supervisor can take a very long time before they begin a campaign of discrediting and/or disciplining a whistleblower.

I have heard employees say that they would never file a complaint unless they were ready to retire. One employee who disclosed information internally to no avail told me just before he left the university that if he had known how much heartache he would bring upon himself, he would never have disclosed the information.

Two years is not enough time to protect an employee from retaliation. I am not sure that three years is sufficient, but that is our recommendation.

We applaud the work the committee has done to produce this legislation and we support the recommendations with the suggestions we have made.