



State of Connecticut

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State Representative Bill Wadsworth
Labor and Public Employee Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
Thursday, March 10, 2010

Good Morning Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski, Senator Gomes, Representative Santiago, Senator Guglielmo, Representative Rigby and Labor and Public Employee Committee Membership:

I would like to thank the Labor and Public Employee Committee for raising Senate Bill 990, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVAILING RATE OF WAGES

As you may be aware, the prevailing wage limits in Connecticut have not been raised since 1991. Inflation alone should dictate that adjustments be made to these threshold amounts. Indeed, it is reasonable that there should be a mechanism to increase the threshold amount that is indexed to inflation so that we do not have this discussion every twenty years.

The imposition of prevailing rates on public works projects is tantamount to an unfunded mandate on municipalities. It is generally recognized that, if public works projects were bid on in the open market, the bids would come in substantially less due to the fact that labor in the private sector is less expensive than the prevailing wage. This would result in significant cost savings to municipalities which would result in fewer taxes to our residents. Moreover, this would give rise to the opportunity to have more work done for the same cost.

Many municipalities make the decision not to proceed on public works projects because of the cost. Having the ability to make the expenditure of a capital project as competitive as possible would encourage the municipalities to proceed with more projects and benefit from greater productivity. This would create more jobs and since the main focus of this legislative session is to create jobs, using our available resources to provide additional employment should be a priority.

I thank the committee for considering proposed Senate Bill 990 and I ask that they be given a favorable report.