



**Administrative and Residual Employees Union
Local 4200, AFT CT, AFT, AFL-CIO**

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Professionals Working So State Government Works

Written Testimony of

Laila A. Mandour, President

Administrative & Residual Employees Union

S.B. 36 – AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE STATE CODES OF ETHICS

February 17, 2012

Senator Slossberg, Representative Morin and Members of the GAE Committee:

The Administrative & Residual Employees Union (A&R), AFT Local 4200, represents professional employees in state service. Our membership ranks among one of largest state employee locals. We have members across the State of Connecticut at nearly every state agency, including the Office of State Ethics and the Citizen's Election Advisory Board.

I would like to bring to your attention S.B. 36, Sections 4 (b) and 6 (i), which, if passed, would prohibit our members, who are employed at the Office of State Ethics and the Citizen's Election Advisory Board, from participating in all forms of political activity on behalf of any candidate seeking public office. While A&R supports the *intent* of the legislation, the wording is overly broad and punitive to our members.

It is understandable that state employees should be excluded from *state* political activity, especially since they regulate state political activity – such exclusion would cultivate public trust and avoid the appearance of partiality and impropriety. However, since neither the Office of State Ethics nor the Citizen's Election Advisory Board have jurisdiction over federal or municipal elections, I would ask that you amend Sections 4 and 5 to provide that state employees are *only* prohibited from participating in state elections for constitutional officers and members of the General Assembly.

Our members are dedicated public servants. They are involved in their local communities and they should not be prohibited from engaging in political activity at the municipal and federal level, especially where they have no federal or municipal jurisdiction or regulatory oversight.

The Committee passed a similar bill during the 2010 session (S.B. 366) and the JF substitute language included the clarification we are seeking in S.B. 36. I would respectfully request that you include this change if the bill is sent out of Committee.

Thank you for your consideration.