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CONNECTICUT
STATE COUNCIL

SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
CTW, CLC

Main Office:
77 Huyshope Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
860.251.6091
Fax: 860.548.1935

777 Summer Street
5th floor, Suite 501
Stamford, CT 06901
203.602.6615
Fax: 203.964.0428

Testimony of Stacey Zimmerman on behalf of SEIU – CT State Council

H.B. No. 5311 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS THAT ARE PRIVATELY FUNDED. – **OPPOSED**

H.B. No. 5401 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING LEASEBACKS AND THE PREVAILING WAGE THRESHOLD. – **OPPOSED**

H.B. No. 5403 (RAISED) AN ACT PROHIBITING LOBBYING BY STATE EMPLOYEES ON STATE TIME. – **OPPOSED**

S.B. No. 352 (RAISED) AN ACT CREATING A PROCESS FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THE STATE. – **SUPPORT**

H.B. No. 5433 (RAISED) AN ACT CREATING A PROCEDURE FOR PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THE STATE. – **SUPPORT**

March 13, 2012

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski and the members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council represents over 53,000 active and retired members in Connecticut. SEIU is the states largest union with both public and private sector members.

SEIU, supports **S.B. No. 352** (RAISED) AN ACT CREATING A PROCESS FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THE STATE and **H.B. No. 5433** (RAISED) AN ACT CREATING A PROCEDURE FOR PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THE STATE. The Committee will have heard from many experts and workers who understand that the ability to organize into a collective voice will not only ensure better working conditions for the caregivers but a more reliable and professional system for the recipients of care. We have witnessed the positive affect of such legislation in many states, including our neighbor Massachusetts. The professionalization of these jobs bring the issues of child care, elder care, and home health care to the forefront of the political dialog out of the shadows that they have been kept in for years.

SEIU, opposes **H.B. No. 5311** (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS THAT ARE PRIVATELY FUNDED and **H.B. No. 5401** (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING LEASEBACKS AND THE PREVAILING WAGE THRESHOLD. We have concerns that

both of these bills may enable a race to the bottom of the economic ladder. Government projects should set an example of how to treat workers in our society not exacerbate the on going problem of low pay and no benefits. Connecticut already has the second highest threshold in the county for Prevailing Wage and yet is among the highest cost of living areas in the country. This should be seen as an outrage that in a state that prides itself on leading the country on so many important issues; is willing to follow the destructive path of making construction jobs, poverty jobs.

SEIU also opposes **H.B. No. 5403** (RAISED) AN ACT PROHIBITING LOBBYING BY STATE EMPLOYEES ON STATE TIME. This is a bill in search of a problem. 5403 may make a good sound-bite but would address a problem that doesn't seem to exist and may very well prove detrimental to the Legislature's ability to perform its function of affectively vetting programs and services. We do not condone workers being derelict in their responsibilities but maintain that the elected leadership of the workplace has the right and responsibility to speak to the General Assembly in their role as a union leader. Many of the contracts have provisions for this to happen and it seems this bill would void such provisions. The path to an open and transparent government would be greatly stifled with this bill.