

Marie Friess-McSparran
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Senator Prague, Rep Zalaski and members of the committee thank you so much for holding a hearing on Senate Bill 181.

My name is Marie Friess-McSparran. I am a sitting member of the New London City Council and Chairwoman of the School Building and Maintenance Committee.

I see firsthand the benefits of both the prevailing wage law and standard wage law in New London. Unemployment in my city hovers around 8%. Though our economy has improved over the last ten years, our city's median income is still about \$20,000 less than the State's overall. But I'm proud of my city. We have taken on progressive and controversial initiatives. We've worked hard to create jobs and economic development.

One of the initiatives that best worked for our city was the Responsible Contractor Ordinance. Unfortunately, the ordinance was revoked under our last mayor. Our new city council and our new mayor are working diligently to put that ordinance back in place. What the ordinance did was help to stimulate in-state hiring of both responsible Connecticut contractors and Connecticut workers on our construction projects.

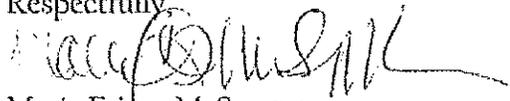
And what's interesting about the ordinance is that since it was written into the city charter, the ordinance did not simply apply to public construction projects. We wanted local companies and local workers on all of our capital improvement projects. We wanted to make sure that there were jobs for our licensed, skilled workers who had graduated from apprenticeship programs. We wanted to make sure that the bidding process was a fair and level-playing field for our small businesses.

What's frustrating as a city council member is seeing tax dollars flow out of state when those jobs and those revenues are needed so desperately here at home.

I am urging you to vote *YES* on Senate Bill 181. The construction industry and the service industry should not be poverty jobs. The contracts for the construction work and service work should not be lost to out-of-state unscrupulous companies who are lining up to disenfranchise Connecticut workers and Connecticut tax payers.

Let's work together to stimulate our economy and to place standards on businesses that choose to take our grant money. Let's put Connecticut back to work! Thank you.

Respectfully,



Marie Friess-McSparran
Councilwoman, New London