

# 32BJ



# SEIU

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February 28, 2012

Connecticut General Assembly  
Labor and Public Employees Committee  
Room 3800, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **SB 181**, "The Good Jobs Bill"

Representative Zalaski, Senator Prague, and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is April Piette. I'm 52 years old and I work as a security officer at a state of Connecticut building where the social services, revenue services, and homeland security department have their main offices.

I've been a security guard since 1994, working for little money, protecting building, property and people. I'm here today because I believe that working people should be able to earn decent pay for a decent day's work -- especially when they're employed by contractors who get state tax dollars.

That's what Senate Bill 181 is all about.

See, my job is to protect others. I make sure that folks feel safe when they get to work. I take my job seriously, but sometimes I wonder: I've got all these people's back, but who's got mine?

It's tough out there. I live with my sister who also worked as a security officer for years. She has cervical disc disease and cannot work anymore. I take care of her and I am sick myself. I suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, but with the little money I make I cannot afford my employer's healthcare plan and I'm forced to use public assistance to take care of my condition.

I'm not the only one at work -- very few of my co-workers take our employer's insurance because the premium share costs are simply too high. That tells you a lot.

The question we should be asking is -- should our state be rewarding employers that pay poorly, and don't provide affordable healthcare? Or we should reward those who promote decent jobs? That's what we are talking about here.

My point is that security contractors and elected officials should ensure public safety by turning these poverty jobs into stable positions. A growing industry like private security should be held accountable by creating good jobs that support strong communities. Especially if these contractors are working for the state.

In many other cities around the country, security companies pay good family-sustaining wages. Why shouldn't the contractors who work for the State of Connecticut?

We all know the difference that a real pay raise and benefits can make. Not only does it mean you can better support your families, but you can support local businesses and strengthen your neighborhood.

So, I ask you all. Are you going to help us in our fight for good jobs?

I hope we can count on you to pass Senate Bill 181. That's how you can make sure contractors don't use our tax dollars to create more poverty.

**April Piette**  
Patrol Officer, SOS Security, Inc.

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