

Alexandria Rios

HB5921 Testimony

Labor and Public Employees Committee

2/28/12

Hi, my name is Alexandria Rios. I am currently living and working in Hartford for a wage that does not allow me to get ahead. I've worked for \$8.25 the last seven months at my current job – but this isn't the first place that has paid me minimum wage. People are saying minimum wage is entry level and for teenagers, but throughout the time that I've been here I've tried to find a better job, or figure out ways to get a raise and work towards better pay. Nothing works. When I apply for better employment, my resume is pushed to the side once employers see that I work in fast food. When I speak with my boss about a raise, it's like I'm speaking on deaf ears. But of course, there's never any shortage of responsibilities. My company expects me to perform the duties of a manager, even though I'm not paid like one. It's frustrating.

Looking at my check on payday is heart breaking. It's difficult to get by on what I make, and it's impossible to get ahead on it. Saving is not an option – I'm lucky if I finish most months without borrowing from friends and family to stay out of debt and keep the bills paid. I'd love to be able to be able to drive back and forth to work, and maybe then find a better job in another town – but the way it is now, I can't save enough to get my license – never mind a car.

It's even more heartbreaking when I look at the company I work for. I don't make sandwiches at a local deli; I make sandwiches at company with shops all across the world. It seems almost like, selling a foot-long for \$5.00 is more important to the company than the people who work hard day after day on the frontlines to service the customer.

I hope that the people who are against raising the minimum wage understand what I am going through. I work hard every single day, and still end most months without enough money to pay the rent or put food in my mouth. I don't expect fancy cars or expensive clothes. All I am asking for is to be paid fairly for the work that I do. That's why I am asking state legislators and Governor Malloy to do the right thing to make sure me and people just like me are paid fairly and have enough to take care of ourselves and our families. While our bosses get richer and richer, we suffer at the bottom and it's just not right. People are falling behind, and if the minimum wage is not raised right away, it will continue to happen.

Please think of me, and the thousands of workers all across Connecticut just like me when you go to vote on this bill. We need you to do what our bosses won't do. Please raise the minimum wage.