



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
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Testimony submitted to the Appropriations Committee

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House Bill 5454

“AN ACT CONCERNING VOTING BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS AND AGREEMENTS AND STIPULATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH A LAWSUIT.”

We, as legislators are entrusted with the responsibility of deciding how taxpayer's money is spent. We spend months reviewing appropriations, revenue streams, and borrowing requests. But, there is one area of the state budget that does not require the approval of the legislature – state employee compensation.

More than \$3 billion of the state's budget is spent on salaries for our state employees. More than \$1.5 billion additional is spent on fringe benefits – pensions and healthcare mostly.

Most of those employee benefits are collectively bargained and do not require approval from the legislature. The legislature currently has the option to vote against these agreements but is not required to vote in favor of these agreements for them to become law. Not voting on these agreements has become the norm. Salaries and benefits of state employees make up almost 30% of our state budget; we owe it to our constituents to actually vote on these agreements and give them the scrutiny they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration, and I urge the Committee to approve HB 5454.