



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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Testimony of Todd Berch
Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee

January 31, 2013

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee.

My name is Todd Berch and I am with the Connecticut AFL-CIO.

I am here today to testify on behalf of the 900 affiliated local unions that represent over 200,000 union members from all 169 cities and towns of Connecticut in support of Raised House Bill #5713, an act concerning the inclusion of labor history in the public school curriculum.

Though the full content of subject matter is not addressed in the proposed legislation, we fully support this bill as a starting point enabling students an opportunity to be informed about the structure of workforce/ workplace processes and the roles workers have had and continue to have in creating history. Most historical events are currently being taught without the emphasis of how these events transpired or even prefaced relative to labor. By including labor history in high school curriculum we would finally be able to honor the men, women, and at one time children who toiled to create a middle class and make this country great.

The State of Connecticut grants the right of an education to all children. The student is afforded every opportunity to pursue their interest in any occupation or field. When a student completes their education they transition from student to worker. Where the educational process needs to be enhanced is through additional subject matter such that is being discussed today.

I wish to state throughout our history, the unions of the CT AFL-CIO have stood up and given voice to workers whether they are in a union or not. The mission statement of the AFL-CIO is to improve the lives of working families, to bring economic justice to the workplace, and social justice to our nation. That being said labor history as a curriculum enhancement encompasses an education of work rules, benefits, and safety laws that we all currently abide by and enjoy as a direct reflection of our past history.

Regardless of what side of labor issues you may take, passing this legislation affords the opportunity for a student that is transitioning into the workforce an overview in order for them to make an adequately informed decision about the labor opportunities that are available to them.

We appreciate the committee holding this public hearing and would be happy to address your questions.

Thank You

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