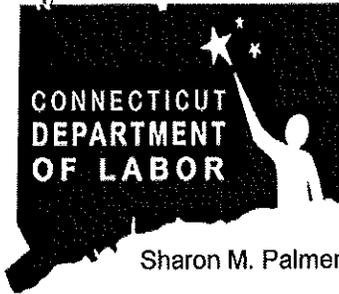


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Sharon M. Palmer

Commissioner

**Public Hearing Testimony of
Sharon Palmer, Commissioner
Department of Labor
Labor and Public Employees Committee
February 19, 2013**

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak, Senator Markley, Representative Smith and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with testimony regarding **House Bill #6371: AAC the Disclosure of Performance Evaluations of Members of the State Board of Labor Relations (SBLR) and the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration.** My name is Sharon Palmer and I am the Labor Commissioner.

I am here to speak in support of this bill. In the court system, attorneys and others who appear before judges have the opportunity to fill out confidential evaluations of the judges for the Judicial Department. Pursuant to Section 2-40a of the general statutes, the performance evaluations of judges are made available solely to the members of the joint standing committee on judiciary prior to any public hearing on the nomination of any such judge and to the members of the Judicial Selection Commission in the performance of their duties. Many states have confidential evaluations for judges and administrative law judges. The evaluations in almost all circumstances are kept confidential.

In this bill, this same process would be instituted for members of the SBLR and SBMA. The evaluation forms will be provided to users of the services of the members of the SBLR and SBMA to evaluate the member's performance. The evaluations shall remain in confidence known only to the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Labor, the Office of the Governor, the individual Board member evaluated and those assigned to present the information to and evaluate the member.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today and I am available to answer any questions that you may have.

DOL provided services to over 7,600 veterans in the past year for all of our services. It is anticipated that there will be another 7,000 veterans who will be leaving the military and who will need services. Not all of these veterans will need the STEP UP because many will use the GI Bill to attend college or receive other training or educational services. Therefore, broadening the definition of "veteran" will enable DOL to reach more veterans than we would be able to serve under the law as it is currently written. This proposal will not only assist our deserving veterans but will also help create jobs and grow Connecticut's economy.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony here today. I am available to answer any questions you may have.