

Testimony in Support of SB 387  
"AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM FAIR WAGE"  
The Rev. Joshua Mason Pawelek  
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January 31, 2013

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Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

It is an honor to submit testimony to you in support of SB 387, "An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage." I support this bill for a number of reasons.

First and foremost, as has been pointed out by many other proponents of this bill and its recent predecessors, the average full-time minimum wage earner in Connecticut working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, earns \$17,160 a year. There are approximately 106,000 workers earning their income at this rate. This is simply not enough money for an individual to procure all of life's necessities (housing, food, medicine, transportation, utilities, computer access, clothing, etc.) through the course of a year in Connecticut. This is not enough money to ensure that an individual can conduct a safe and healthy life. This is certainly not enough money for an individual to engage in meaningful long-range financial planning. And if that individual has children, \$17,160 per year is a picture of economic hopelessness. It is simply not enough. Will SB 387's proposed increase in the minimum wage be enough to alter the face of poverty in Connecticut? Not on its own. But it will help plug some economic holes in the lives of minimum wage workers. It is one positive step among many state government ought to take to help ease the economic burdens minimum wage workers currently face.

Second, I am persuaded by the argument that higher paid workers are more satisfied, loyal, motivated and productive. I refer back to Professor Johnny Williams explores the data supporting this argument in his February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012 *Hartford Courant* op-ed entitled, "Higher Minimum Wage Good for Workers, Economy." While some argue that raising the minimum wage creates an unfriendly climate for business, I'm not so sure. Do we want to live in a state that is racing to the bottom in terms of wages, where low-income and minimum wage workers have less money to spend and create an ever-growing drag on government resources and services? Or do we want to live in a state where wages keep pace with inflation, where fewer workers live in poverty, and where the work-force is more motivated, healthy and productive? In my view, the latter is the more business-friendly climate. Yes, it costs businesses slightly more to have such a climate, but I suspect the extra cost pales in comparison to the costs associated with a more impoverished work-force.

Finally, I support SB 387 because I believe it is the right thing to do. Life is hard for minimum wage workers. As a society we ought to make it our priority to do whatever we can realistically do to ease the burdens of the most vulnerable. Raising the minimum wage is one of those things we can realistically do.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. Joshua Mason Pawelek



To: The General Assembly Committee on Labor and Public Employees  
Date: Thursday, January 31, 2013

**Testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Child Care Association (CCCA) in opposition to the passage of RSB 387, “An Act Increasing the Fair Minimum Wage”**

Chairpersons and Members of the Labor Committee,

Our names are Gerry Pastor and Haylee Marcuccio and we are the owners of Connecticut, for-profit day care centers and members of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Child Care Association of Connecticut.

The CT Child Care Association represents the interests of numerous private child care providers across the state. At this time there are more than 1,500 licensed child care centers in Connecticut of which approximately 1,100 subsist primarily on private funded tuitions. These programs represent a total capacity of approximately 70,000 children and approximately 20,000 employees.

CCCA would like to offer comments to you today in response to **RSB 387, “An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage”**. We believe the current proposal of an 18% increase, or, \$1.50 per hour over the next two years and subsequent indexing to inflation would impose a severe financial hardship on child care providers and the families they serve across the state.

As active participants in the childcare industry, owners and managers understand the incredible hard work, energy and commitment that childcare teachers invest on a daily basis. This is not a question of the value of employees; this is a question of financial stability for the child care industry in the state of Connecticut and our ability to meet our bottom lines.

In the childcare industry (as with many others), the single largest expense is payroll which consumes approximately 50% of revenues. The remaining 50% is used for