

**Testimony on Senate Bill 387: AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM FAIR  
WAGE**

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Good afternoon members of the Labor Committee. My name is Carissa Sfakios. I am a resident of Newington and am employed as a social worker in an outpatient mental health setting. I am writing this testimony in strong support of SB 387 because frankly, people that are employed full-time should not be faced with extreme poverty. \$8.25 per hour or \$330.00 a week *before taxes*, is not nearly enough to make a viable living in Connecticut, even at a full time rate. In fact, it would take approximately 100 hours a week at \$8.25 an hour to make a living that would barely sustain basic needs and bills for a small family.

It has been concerning to watch business owners fight this legislation in the past, claiming it would put them out of business if they had to pay their employees more than they already do. What about their employees that are unable to pay their bills while their debt continues to build? Or are forced to make difficult choices over buying food or having medications? Or wonder how they will make their student loan or mortgage payment this month? In many cases, people that make minimum wage are forced to seek community resources for food security and health care needs to help supplement their income.

As a social worker, I have had several internships and jobs with very small CT based non-profit organizations with bare minimum resources. These organizations made it a priority to provide their employees with fair wages *and* healthcare and doing so has not forced them out of business.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my thoughts about the importance of increasing the minimum wage. Below is a quotation that really speaks to this issue in a manner that is succinct and reflective of what is really going on: "I grew up hearing over and over, to the point of tedium, that "hard work" was the secret of success: "Work hard and you'll get ahead" or "It's hard work that got us where we are." No one ever said that you could work hard - harder even than you ever thought possible - and still find yourself sinking ever deeper into poverty and debt." - Barbara Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America.