



A Better Way Foundation is a Connecticut non-profit organization that is dedicated to a sensible shift in drug policy from one of incarceration to substance abuse treatment and public health.

**A Better Way Foundation's Testimony
Labor and Public Employees Committee
Raised SB 387 AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM FAIR WAGE**

January 29, 2013

Good evening Appropriations Committee. My name is LaResse Harvey and I am the Director of Strategic Relations at A Better Way Foundation. A Better Way Foundation is a statewide advocacy organization with more than 8,000 members throughout the state of Connecticut. A Better Way Foundation works with more than 200 agencies, organizations and community groups. We use research, public education, advocacy and organizing in order to create progressive drug policy and criminal justice reform in Connecticut.

A Better Way Foundation supports increasing the state minimum wage. According to **Meeting the Challenge: The Dynamics of Poverty in Connecticut** a report done by CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY ACTION CONNECTICUT CENTER FOR ECONOMIC ANALYSIS released this month states, in 2010, there were more than 720,000 people or 21% of Connecticut residents living at or near poverty in Connecticut.

In 20 years residents living below Federal Poverty Guidelines increased by 45%:

- Here are a few Connecticut towns who's residence are living below Federal Poverty Guidelines population in 2010:

○ Willington	○ North Canaan	○ New Britain
16%	14%	(current)
		20.5%

- Nearly 1 in 10 residents had incomes below the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), about \$11,000 for an individual or \$22,000 for a family of four.
- Approximately 10% of Connecticut residents have a criminal record. Most are unable to obtain employment.

Equal employment opportunity along with a fair living wage will decrease the number of poor in our state and those in need of social services. Please support **Raised SB 387 AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM FAIR WAGE**.

Respectfully,
LaResse Harvey, BSW
Director of Strategic Relations
A Better Way Foundation