



**Written Public Hearing Testimony of
Sharon Palmer, Commissioner
Department of Labor
Veterans' Affairs Committee
February 19, 2013**

Good Afternoon Senator Leone, Representative Hennessy, Senator Welch, Representative Yaccarino and members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with written testimony regarding **House Bill No. 5131, AAC Unemployment Compensation Benefits for Spouses of Members of the Armed Forces Who Are Deployed or Transferred**. My name is Sharon Palmer and I am the Labor Commissioner.

Given that the passage of this proposal would place Connecticut out of conformity with federal law, I must oppose it. While I understand and support the intent of the proposal, as the Labor Commissioner I must bring several items to your attention.

First, the Connecticut Unemployment Compensation Act, section 31-236(a)(2)(A)(v), already contains language similar to this proposed bill. Specifically, this statute already allows spouses that relocate with a spouse who is a member of the armed forces to be eligible for unemployment benefits.

However, Connecticut law cannot waive an individual's requirement to be able and available for work after separating from employment as this is a requirement for all state laws under federal law. Specifically, Section 20 CFR 604.3 of the federal regulations requires that states may only pay unemployment benefits to an individual who is able to work and available for work for the week for which Unemployment Compensation (UC) is claimed.

Adopting a law which does not conform to federal law would have a dramatic negative impact on the operation of the UC program in Connecticut due to the potential loss of the administrative grants which fund the administration of the program, and the loss of Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) tax credits for Connecticut employers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony.