



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION



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February 11, 2014

### **Testimony supporting more investigators for the Department of Labor**

Greetings Senator Bye, Representative Walker and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Arlene Avery. I live in Stafford and serve on the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission representing Tolland County. This testimony concerns the Department of Labor and their need to have more investigators on staff. The Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission is committed to helping insure that all of Connecticut's workers are treated fairly and receive the wages and benefits due to them.

The Commission is aware of a dire situation among many low wage restaurant workers not making livable wages. In addition to their low wages, many of these workers are not being paid the wages that are due to them. This was recently brought to light by the Department of Labor's investigation of complaints brought by restaurant workers at Gourmet Heaven in New Haven. After a thorough investigation, it was determined that many of Gourmet Heaven's workers were victims of wage theft. The Department of Labor receives complaints from restaurant workers on a daily basis, but does not have the necessary staff to investigate.

Of particular concern to APAAC is the high number of Asian American restaurant workers in Connecticut. These workers are more prone to exploitation and illegal treatment because of language and literacy barriers. Many of them are unaware of their legal rights. For these reasons, the Commission strongly supports funding for additional investigators for the Department of Labor. The Commission also strongly recommends that these investigators be bilingual. Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Arlene Avery  
APAAC Legislative Committee Chair

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