



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN  
BOARD OF ALDERS**

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**Testimony to General Assembly Appropriations Committee on Department of Labor's request for six new positions to combat wage theft.**

I write to support the addition of the six positions requested by the Department of Labor to enforce the laws related to wage theft.

Wage theft incidents can happen in any type of job and to any employee whether they are in the manufacturing industry, repair services, private home employment, home health care, education, construction, restaurants, grocery stores, retail, or warehousing. Wherever it is we need the staff to stop this injustice.

Whether its wage theft as a result of abuse of overtime, minimum wage violations, employer misclassifications, illegal deductions in pay, working off the clock, or not paying workers at all, none of it should be allowed to go unaddressed in our state. Now is time for us to send the message that all violations that are going on must stop. However, to be able to address this problem the department needs adequate staff.

In New Haven we have received increasing complaints of wage theft. The problem is significant enough that we have set up a working group to review this issue. What came out of it is that there are more violations occurring than we have the people to enforce. What has become clear to us is that we need to crackdown hard right now but to effectively do that the state needs more staff to address this issue.

We need these positions to get the message out to those employers who engage in the previously mentioned practices or put pressure on injured workers to not file for workers' compensation or that threaten firings or calls to immigration services if their employees complain or seek assistance.

These positions will help us to get employers into compliance by changing their work practices and paying back missed wages to the employees. The more we do this the better the business climate will be for everyone but especially for those who are already observing the laws. This will remove the competitive disadvantage that they might face from those in violation and reduces and incentive to become a scofflaw that illegally withholds wages or denies benefits that are rightfully owed to an employee.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that you favorably consider these six positions as the time is now for us to act and this is the right thing to do for all of the residents, employers, and employees in our state.

Thank you.

Hon. Jorge Perez  
President, New Haven Board of Alders