

Labor and Public Employees Committee
Public Hearing, February 27, 2014

Sen. Osten, Rep. Tercyak, members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 5279, "An act eliminating the minimum fair wage exception for certain citizens of Connecticut." As an Executive Director of a human service agency that supports adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities, **I asked that you not pass this bill as written and carefully examine its inadvertent consequences.**

I believe that if this bill is passed in its current form, untold numbers of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities will lose their jobs. According to the January 2014 issue of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* only 34% of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are employed. Only one-half of those are in community-based employment. We can ill-afford to have that number drop even lower.

I am torn by my opposition to this bill. I, too, consider the current sub-minimum wage provisions as inequitable and in need of change. I have always advocated for the unfettered access to community employment at prevailing wages for those I have served and wholeheartedly support "equal pay for equal work." However, HB 5279 may only accomplish this for a small number of individuals while a significant number will lose their employment.

Again, I asked that you not pass HB 5279 but, rather work with those who provide employment services to these individuals to amend the law as written and eliminate the sub-minimum wage provision by a measured and well thought through approach. I am sure we can achieve that collectively.

I welcome your questions and can reach me at my office at (203) 234-7737 or via email: rpittman@vantagegroupinc.org.

Respectfully yours,

Rick Pittman
Executive Director
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