Council 4 AFSCME
Testimony before the Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly
March 11, 2014

Senator Holder-Winfield, Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor Committee. My name is Matthew Brokman and I'm a representative of Council 4 AFSCME. Our union represents 32,000 workers across Connecticut.

Council 4 supports HB 5345: AAC Workforce Investment Boards.

Council 4 represents state Department of Labor staff in Employment Services. These staff help Connecticut's unemployed workers find jobs, help veterans put their skills to use in new professions, and help employers find qualified applicants. However, federal funding for this work, Wagner-Peyser funding, has essentially flat lined over the past decade.

Council 4 conducted an extensive analysis of Workforce Investment Board's workflow and reporting documents that is attached to our testimony today. Our report finds that:

- WIB services are provided at a relatively high cost
- There is a lack of coordination between workforce investment programs
- The average earnings for individuals that exit WIB programs are low

This bill will bring some oversight and attention to this issue so that we can make sure that every element of our workforce system is in-sync with the job creation strategies that Governor Malloy and this legislature have put in place.

Council 4 supports HB 5451: AAC Health Care Pooling.

Council 4 represents bargaining units in the majority of municipalities in Connecticut. We have consistently advocated that towns submit the necessary data to the Comptroller to see what, if any, savings the town and their employees may gain by moving to the state pooling plan. However, too often politics gets in the way. This bill would give us the ability to have real, meaningful discussions at the bargaining table.

Council 4 supports SB 242: AAC Sick Leave for Teacher Assistants and Radiologic Technologists.

These are professionals that work closely with some of our most vulnerable populations, including children and those receiving cancer treatment. Council 4 represents many teacher assistants who report increasing numbers of students coming to school sick. It is for everyone's benefit that these workers be able to earn paid sick days so they can stay healthy and effectively do their jobs.

Council 4 opposes HB 5315: AA Allowing Employers to Pay Wages Using Payroll Cards.

Without sufficient protections for employees, this bill could result in them being subject to high fees. Workers must earn every dollar in their paychecks, they should not be forced to turn over those funds to the big banks in the form of ATM fees or usage fees or non-usage fees or any other fee.

Council 4 opposes HB 5454: AAC Apprenticeship Ratios.

This legislation fixes a problem that does not exist. It proposes to revise a system that has been found to be successful in ensuring that businesses are built safely. We urge you to reject this bill.