



**Testimony of Win Heimer, Executive Vice President
Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans
Before the Education Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
February 25, 2015**

In support of SB 963 - An Act Concerning A Labor and Free Market Capitalism Curriculum

SENATOR SLOSBERG, REPRESENTATIVE FLEISCHMANN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY...

MY NAME IS WIN HEIMER. I AM A RESIDENT OF WEST HARTFORD AND THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CONNECTICUT ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS. THE ALLIANCE IS THE STATE AFFILIATE OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS AND COMPRISES 50,000 MEMBERS IN CONNECTICUT.

WE URGE YOUR SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 963– AN ACT CONCERNING A LABOR AND FREE MARKET CAPITALISM CURRICULUM.

I BELIEVE IT WAS FORMER UNITED STATES SENATOR JOE LIEBERMAN WHO ONCE SAID “THERE ARE TWO THINGS THAT MADE THIS COUNTRY GREAT: PUBLIC EDUCATION AND LABOR UNIONS. THEY BUILT THE MIDDLE CLASS.”

BUT HOW MANY OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE KNOW THIS? PRACTICALLY NONE OF THIS GENERATION KNOWS THAT IT WAS WORKERS WHO ORGANIZED INTO A LABOR MOVEMENT THAT PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN PROMOTING WORKPLACE SAFETY, THE 40-HOUR 5-DAY WORK WEEK, SOCIAL SECURITY, THE MINIMUM WAGE, AN END TO CHILD LABOR... THE LIST GOES ON AND ON. THESE ARE BENEFITS AND CONDITIONS THAT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED...AND THAT ARE RAPIDLY BEING ERODED.

I’LL BET THAT A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE DON’T EVEN KNOW THAT A NATIONAL LAW THAT WAS PASSED DURING THEIR GRANDPARENT’S DAYS AND IS STILL ON THE BOOKS TODAY ALLOWS WORKERS – NO MATTER THE SETTING - TO COME TOGETHER TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THEIR EMPLOYER OVER WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS.

AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR HISTORY IS BEING LOST. PEOPLE OF MY GENERATION UNDERSTAND THAT REAL BATTLES WERE WAGED FOR THESE ADVANCES AND THAT PEOPLE LITERALLY DIED FOR EXAMPLE TO GAIN AN EIGHT-HOUR WORK DAY. ORGANIZED WORKERS HAVE BEEN A PART OF OUR NATION FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. AFTER ALL, THE FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS MET IN CARPENTERS' HALL IN PHILADELPHIA, A UNION HALL.

BY THE SAME TOKEN, STUDENTS SHOULD ALSO LEARN THE ROLE OF LABOR AND CAPITALISM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN AND WORLD ECONOMIES; THE HISTORY AND ECONOMICS OF FREE MARKET CAPITALISM AND ENTREPRENEURIALISM

THE LANGUAGE WOULD BE INSERTED IN CURRENT STATUTE THAT SIMILARLY ENCOURAGES BUT DOES NOT REQUIRE TEACHING OF TOPICS SUCH AS THE HOLOCAUST, THE GREAT FAMINE IN IRELAND, NATIVE AMERICAN AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY.

THIS PROPOSED BILL MERELY REQUIRES THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION "ASSIST AND ENCOURAGE" LOCAL AND REGIONAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION TO INCLUDE LABOR AND CAPITALISM INTO THEIR CURRICULA.

GOOD TEACHERS AND GOOD TEACHING MATERIALS CAN EASILY INTEGRATE THESE STUDIES WITH OTHER SUBJECTS TO MAKE IT RELEVANT TO TODAY'S STUDENTS. PASSAGE OF SENATE BILL 963 CAN HELP MAKE THAT HAPPEN.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.