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Testimony to the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee
RE: Bill #1137, An Act Concerning the Connecticut Competitiveness Council
April 21, 2015

My name is Gloria Duquette and I live in Hartford. I have been a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for 9 years.

Today you are hearing about Bill #1137, *An Act Concerning the Connecticut Competitiveness Council*. This bill would create a committee to “evaluate and promote economic competitiveness” as compared to other states.

Connecticut should be competing for those businesses that want to be surrounded by a community that invests in good jobs, quality services and livable communities. But I’m here today to say: the state has *not* invested enough into its healthcare services -- and hardworking caregivers like me and our services are suffering because of it.

I’m a certified nursing assistant, helping residents with everything they need from bathing and feeding to often times being their only friend and companion. I love working because I love my residents. I frequently work as a CNA in the rehab unit, and I get the opportunity to meet different, interesting, loving people every day. They are my family, and the nursing home is our home. When I’m not at work, my residents miss me and I miss them.

I am currently working three different jobs. For 40 hours per week, I’m a CNA at Kimberly Hall South nursing home in Windsor. I work another 32 hours each week as CNA at Saint Mary’s Home nursing home in West Hartford. And for around 14 hours each week, I also work as a home care aide with Jewish Family Services of Greater Hartford.

Why do I work so many hours? Because each of my three jobs pays me less than \$15 an hour. Sometimes, no matter how hard I work – no matter how tired I feel – I still

struggle to make ends meet. I have been a part-time student on again and off again since 2008, but because I get paid so little and have to work so many hours, I have been unable to finish.

But just because I love what I do doesn't mean I shouldn't be paid fairly.

The nursing home residents to whom I provide care are often hardworking people who dedicated their lives to their families and their communities. We owe it to them to provide an environment in which they can live and grow as happily as possible.

I urge you to focus on ways to lift our state up, not race to the bottom. As you consider this and other bills, I urge this Committee to please raise the revenue our state desperately needs. I believe that greater public investment will improve the quality of life for patients as well as the quality of the life for the caregivers, like me, who serve them. And in the long-run, that is what will make Connecticut competitive for all the right reasons.