

Bianca, Pam

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From: Robert Godzeno <rmgodzeno@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2015 12:31 PM
To: LABTestimony
Subject: Testimony on HB 5854

To the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

I understand that you are considering HB 5854, An Act Concerning Thanksgiving and Double Overtime Wages. I write enthusiastically in support of this bill. My family and friends have watched in disgust as the traditional "Black Friday" shopping craze has crept its way into Thanksgiving Day. Thanksgiving is one of few holidays that is deeply meaningful to all Americans, regardless of background. Taking some time to be thankful, whether religious or secular, is important to the fabric of our community life as Americans, and increasing commercialization of our lives and holidays is eroding that sense of a common experience. I believe any legislation that can help protect Thanksgiving is positive. If stores believe it is in their best interests to open on this holiday, then they ought to fairly compensate their workers for it.

Another trend that I've learned of recently is that certain malls and shopping centers actually impose a fine on stores if they do not open. It is one thing for a store to decide to open, but another entirely for the mall or shopping center to force a store to open. Many small family businesses in the Stamford Town Center were negatively impacted by this practice. They would have rather closed that day and give their family and workers a day off. Instead, they were forced to open and pay their staff on a day when they did very little business. These small shops cannot compete with large stores offering deep discounts, so why force them to open and lose money? I believe the state should impose a tax equal to 200% of any fines collected by malls or shopping centers imposing such a policy. In other words, if a mall fined a store \$1000 for not opening on Thanksgiving, the mall would be required to pay a tax of \$2000 to the state. This would put a quick end to this unfair practice. There are many precedents for these types of punitive taxes. Consider the Federal private foundation rules in the Internal Revenue Code, for example. The Code imposes taxes on self-dealing transactions, and the taxes exceed the amount of the self-dealing transaction. These provisions are very successful in preventing self-dealing.

Thank you for working on this important issue.

Sincerely,

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