



**State of Connecticut**  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**Testimony in Support of  
House Bill Number 5848  
House Bill Number 5876  
House Bill Number 6249**

**Labor Committee  
February 17, 2015**

Chairmen Tercyak and Holder-Winfield, Ranking Members Rutigliano and Hwang and Members of the Labor Committee, the House Republican Caucus would like to thank the Committee for raising **House Bill Number 5848: An Act Concerning Women Re-Entering the Workforce**, **House Bill Number 6249: An Act Establishing a Tax Credit Program for Employers Who Offer On-Site Child Day Care Options for Employees**, and **House Bill Number 5876: An Act Increasing the Penalties Assessed Against Labor Organizations That Fail to File an Annual Report**.

These bills are important House Republican proposals to help working women and families as well as to encourage transparency in the operation of state employee unions.

**House Bill Number 5848: An Act Concerning Women Re-Entering the Workforce**

This bill requires the Department of Labor to establish a career re-entry program for women who chose to leave the workforce to raise a family. This program would focus on technology training, updating knowledge on changes in workplace technology, interviewing skills, and other areas of specific concern to women rejoining the workforce after a prolonged period of absence.

Research shows that folks who have taken a break from their careers, primarily women, find it very difficult - if not almost impossible - to restart their careers after a long absence. Computer software has likely changed; strategies for interviewing and job searching have likely evolved as well.

Academia and the private sector have taken the lead in "returnships" offering over 80 such programs worldwide. As Connecticut attempts to position itself as a "worker friendly" state, it would do well to follow this lead and offer career re-entry services to folks for whom they might not otherwise be available and to provide an opportunity to women especially to sharpen their skills in a work environment that has likely changed dramatically since they last participated.

Women who decide to go back to work after taking time off to raise a family should not be at a disadvantage when choosing to go back to work. This bill would provide the training and updated skills they need to make their transition back into the labor market as smooth as possible.

#### **House Bill Number 6249: An Act Establishing a Tax Credit Program for Employers Who Offer On-Site Child Day Care Options for Employees**

This bill does exactly what it says – without adding yet another mandate on our state's businesses, it provides an incentive for them to offer on-site day care services for the children of their employees. As you may know, child care costs have risen dramatically in recent years and a monthly child daycare bill can rival a family's mortgage payment. Employers who invest in their employees by building daycare facilities and operations at the workplace and providing these services to their workers should be celebrated and rewarded for making daycare more convenient, more accessible, and more affordable for families.

There are already two programs that help families with child care, but each has its drawbacks. Employers can offer a child care exclusion which would allow an employee to set aside up to \$5,000 from her salary to pay for child care expenses and exclude these expenses from taxable income. The problem with this program is that the employer has to offer it and not all of them do. The federal government also offers a tax credit which would apply to as much as \$3,000 of child care expenses per child to a maximum of \$6,000, but it only benefits families with child care expenses who owe federal income taxes.

By providing a tax credit to employers at the state level we would be encouraging them to confront their employees' child care challenges head on.

#### **House Bill Number 5876: An Act Increasing the Penalties Assessed Against Labor Organizations That Fail to File an Annual Report**

Private sector unions are required, pursuant to the federal Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (LMRDA), to report and disclose salary, benefit, and other information of bargaining representatives. However, under state law, Connecticut public employee unions are not required to meet the same standard.

CGS 31-77 requires unions of at least 25 members that are not subject to the LMRDA to report the same information to the state DOL; however, according to the Department's legislative liaison, no such report has been submitted in at least the last twenty years. In fact, eleven of the public employee unions that make up SEBAC did not file information with the federal government (according to a check of the federal website<sup>1</sup>) and, if they don't, they're required by CGS 31-77 to file such information with the state.

Many state employee unions have circumvented the state's reporting law due to their being affiliates of a national or international labor organization that's subject to the federal reporting requirements.<sup>2</sup> For example, the Connecticut Education Association is not required to file because they're considered a pass-through agency that doesn't directly represent employees. Only four of the thirteen unions in SEBAC are required to report under state law. But even if required to file under federal law, the LMRDA reports provide only a snapshot of a particular union's financial position at the end of the fiscal year. More extensive information is necessary in order make the reports more useful.

House Bill 5876 addresses this issue by increasing the fine and enforcing the law. It insures that public sector unions are complying with state law by increasing the fine for failure to do so (the current fine is the same as it was when the law first passed 55 years ago). Additionally, the information filed ought to be made public, in the same way private sector union information is made public under federal law.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dol.gov/olms/regs/compliance/rrlo/lmrda.htm#1>

<sup>2</sup> This despite *Alabama Education Association v. Chao* which requires affiliates to comply with federal reporting laws.

In this era of more and more corporate disclosure in order to combat "secret money" in political campaigns, it only makes sense that public sector unions ought to be held to the same standard. And as legislative leaders, we're responsible for ensuring that the public knows how public sector unions are being run, and that union members have the information they need to evaluate whether their dues are being used in the way that best represents them and their interests. This transparency is critical to fostering greater accountability of the unions that represent our state workers.

I urge the Labor Committee to pass House Bill 5848, House Bill 6249, and House Bill 5876. Please allow the full General Assembly the opportunity to debate these issues and to pass legislation to help our working women, working families, and to require transparency within our state employee unions.