

Labor and Public Employees Committee

March 5, 2015

House Bill 6791 – Support

House Bill 6784 – Support

House Bill 6877 – Support

House Bill 6932 – Support

Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Stephen Anderson and I am the President of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union which represents thousands of workers employed in the private sector, as well as state and municipal government throughout Connecticut. I am testifying today on behalf of CSEA in support of the following bills: H.B. No. 6791, H.B. No. 6784, H.B. No. 6877, and H.B. No. 6932.

H.B. No. 6791, An Act Concerning Workers' Wages At Large Corporations.

The corporations addressed in this bill are taking advantage of our social safety net in order to pad their profit margin; that's fundamentally wrong and an abuse of the system. To put this problem in perspective, in 2013 Walmart had a net income of \$17 billion yet the company has continued to pay wages so low that their employees qualify for public assistance. A 2014 study by Americans for Tax Fairness found that a single Walmart Supercenter cost taxpayers between \$900,000 and \$1.75 million per year, or between \$3,000 and \$5,800 per worker. This legislation would be an important step towards addressing the abuses of our social safety net that have been institutionalized by these large corporations.

H.B. No. 6784, An Act Expanding Paid Sick Leave

After Connecticut initiated paid sick days in 2011, workers throughout Connecticut saw an immediate benefit. Giving workers the time they need to care for their health is simply smart public policy. CSEA represents school bus drivers throughout the state who, upon passage of that legislation were able to take sick days. This legislation proved to be good not only for the drivers, but for the students who were shielded from illness as drivers were no longer forced to attend work while ill. Unfortunately, that legislation was limited to employers with 50 or more employees. H.B. No. 6784 would expand the current sick days law to cover more employees, allowing even more workers in Connecticut to reap the benefits of this important law.

H.B. No. 6932, An Act Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave.

The United States stands alone among industrialized countries in failing to guarantee workers paid family leave. When a loved one has a health crisis, or when a new child is born or adopted, far too many American workers are forced to take unpaid leave or exit the workforce altogether. Low-income workers and their families are especially vulnerable as they often lack the financial resources necessary to take advantage of unpaid time off. CSEA supports H.B. No. 6932 and other efforts that increase paid leave and cover more workers for longer periods of time so that

employees can both attend to their own health needs and care for loved ones. We are pleased that this proposal will expand the definition of "family member" to include a parent or grandparent.

H.B. No. 6877, An Act Concerning A Minimum Work Week For Janitorial Work

CSEA supports this legislation because it will lead to greater stability for often underappreciated workers performing janitorial work in Connecticut by instituting a minimum 30 hour work week.

I urge you to support all of these important bills. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Stephen Anderson

President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001