

**State of Connecticut**  
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**Affairs Commission**

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**Testimony Supporting Bills SB-106 and SB-914**

Orlando J. Rodriguez  
 Associate Legislative Analyst, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission  
 Labor and Public Employee Committee, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
 Hartford, CT

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Good afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, and distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Orlando Rodriguez and I am an Associate Legislative Analyst with the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). With direction from its board, LPRAC supports Senate bills 106 An Act Concerning Retaliation Against Immigrant Workers and 914 An Act Concerning an Employer's Failure to Pay Wages.

If employers are allowed to retaliate against immigrant workers or withhold wages without consequence, employers may then consider it "open season" to do the same to non-immigrant workers or some other group of individuals they do not happen to like. All workers must have the opportunity to maximize their economic contribution for the state to have a robust economy that benefits all residents.

In 5 years, nearly 20 percent of the state's population will be at least 65 years old and we will need many new workers to support this rapidly aging workforce.<sup>1</sup> Below are a few facts that highlight the state's rapidly changing demographics:

- Nearly 500,000 residents (14 percent of total population) are foreign-born.<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly 250,000 foreign-born residents are naturalized citizens (7 percent of total population).<sup>3</sup>
- The top five countries of birth for the foreign-born population are (1) Jamaica, (2) India, (3) Mexico, (4) Poland, and (5) China.<sup>4</sup>
- In Connecticut, 17 percent of marriages are interracial compared to 15 percent nationwide.<sup>5</sup>
- The Asian population grew by 39 percent from 2000 to 2010.<sup>6</sup>
- Within 15 years, Hispanics will account for 1-in-5 of the working-age population.<sup>7</sup>

The faces and origins of Connecticut's residents are changing, and we cannot determine who is, or is not, an immigrant merely by sight as one Connecticut group tried by stereotyping workers at McDonald's in 2005.<sup>8</sup>

LPRAC thanks this committee for its interest in this topic and welcomes the opportunity to communicate worker rights to the Latino community throughout the state.

<sup>1</sup> Connecticut State Data Center, Connecticut Population Projections 2015-2025, Nov. 2012  
<sup>2</sup> ACS 2013 1-yr DP02  
<sup>3</sup> ACS 2013 1-yr S0201  
<sup>4</sup> ACS 2013 1-yr B05006  
<sup>5</sup> Pew Research Center, The Rise of Inter-marriage, February 16, 2012  
<sup>6</sup> Census 2000 and Census 2010 QT-P5  
<sup>7</sup> Connecticut's Changing Demographics Foreshadow Declining Workforce Income  
<sup>8</sup> The Hartford Courant, Study Prompts Racism Charge, September 29, 2005



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March 4, 2015

To Members of the Labor Committee:

As the owner of Tri Town Foods located in Portland and East Lyme Connecticut, I am writing in opposition to HB No. 6784: An Act Expanding Paid Sick Leave.

The grocery industry is a penny profit business. For every dollar in sales we generate, approximately one penny drops to the bottom line. We are still digesting the costs associated with the passage of the initial paid sick leave legislation effective January 1, 2012 along with the myriad of other laws and regulations that have added to our cost of doing business in this state – minimum wage, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, bottle law expansion, to name a few.

I am opposed to the legislation for the following reasons:

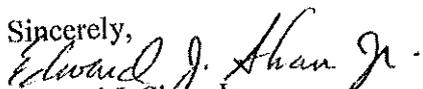
- Increasing the number of hours to 56 is an unreasonable level. At this rate, an employee could accrue more than a week in sick time, in addition to personal and vacation days. It would increase paid sick leave costs 40%.
- Expanding the definition of family member belies the purpose of paid sick leave- keeping sick workers home and not spreading sickness in the workplace.
- The bill continues to make no distinction between full and part-time employees, and requires employers to provide all employees with paid sick leave regardless of their job status. This would lead to increased payroll and benefit cost for part-time employees whose compensation may be far less than the cost of proposed benefit. The supermarket industry relies heavily on part-time employees, many of whom are in their teenage years or mentally challenged, and this would be a disincentive to do so.
- Shortening the eligibility period from 680 hours to 120 calendar days further increases the cost to the retailer and again be a deterrent to hire part-time employees. The mechanism for accruing paid sick leave encourages misuse and abuse.
- The bill could force employers to compensate for their increased labor costs by cutting their workforce and raising prices.
- Mandating a minimum amount of paid sick leave negatively impacts collective bargaining raising the floor for labor union negotiations.

Enacting this bill would force me to rethink the benefits I am currently offering full and part-time employees. I will not be able to afford to offer all. This is only detrimental to the employee. I work very hard to provide a fair, flexible working environment that not only benefits our employees, but also my business and my customers.

Expanding Paid Sick Leave only makes Connecticut's business climate worse and sends a strong anti-business message. It makes Connecticut less competitive in the quest for private sector jobs and drives retailers to open stores in other states.

**I urge you to vote NO on HB No. 6784**

Sincerely,



Edward J. Sharr Jr.

President

Tri Town Foods

**Bianca, Pam**

**From:** wjsfx1@aol.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 05, 2015 2:58 PM  
**To:** LABTestimony  
**Subject:** proposed State bill for minimum wage increase for tipped restaurant employees

To Who It May Concern:

from: William Fox: managing partner Mezzo Grille, Middletown, CT

I'm trying to stay calm and professional about how i want to tell you my thoughts and opinion on this matter.

#1,

I can not begin to tell you how difficult it is for me, the small businessman , when it come to the cost for the amount of paperwork and accounting that is needed to stay up to date with the law when it comes to properly paying my employees there proper wage.

This new proposed law will increase the amt of paperwork and time needed dramatically.

#2. with my 30 years experience I know for sure that the tipped employees now on average are making a very acceptable minimum wage as it is now making it comfortable for them to live in Connecticut.

a raise is not necessary

#3 This proposed wage increase quite possibly will make it impossible for us to get by.  
My business 3 years in a row either just made the smallest miniscule profit or had a loss.

i don't want to have to close my doors

#4. If the new law goes through we will no longer be able to keep skilled employees who are "the best" at what they do.  
The service will drop dramatically. the restaurant businesses as we know it will change for the worse.

#5 Any thoughts of new restaurant business growth in the State can be thrown out the window with this new raise.

Even in these difficult financial times I feel we do live in what might be the best STATE in the UNION. I appreciate everyone wanting to make life better for all. However this law is not necessary. Please Do Not Pass this Law

Thank You

Bill Fox

Stephen Anderson  
President

Roland Bishop  
Secretary/Treasurer

David Glidden  
Executive Director

SEIU Local 2001



Stronger Together

**Labor and Public Employees Committee**  
**March 5, 2015**  
**House Bill 6784 – Support**  
**House Bill 6932 – Support**

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

My name is Wanda Cobbs, I am a resident of Hartford and I submit this testimony in support of H.B. No. 6784, An Act Expanding Paid Sick Leave, and H.B. No. 6932, An Act Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave.

At the time Connecticut's first in the nation paid sick days law took effect in 2011, I was working as a school bus driver in West Hartford. Before the law took effect, when either my children or I fell ill I had to choose: Do I want to work and get paid, or do I want to stay at home with the kids and get them well. Thankfully the 2011 law guaranteed more than 200,000 workers, including myself, the right to earn paid sick days. The law worked. Having the protection of a few sick days a year helped my family have just a little more financial security. But many workers aren't lucky enough to work at an employer large enough to be covered by the 2011 law, which only applied to employers with more than 50 employees.

But a few days of sick time is not enough; 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.

All workers should be able to care for themselves or their loved ones without fear of losing pay or their jobs, regardless of how many employees their employer has. It's the right thing to do, for working families and for the Connecticut economy. I encourage you to support H.B. No. 6784 and H.B. No. 6932.

Wonda Cobbs  
31 Margarita Dr.  
Hartford, CT 06101



**To: Members of the Committee on Labor and Public Employees**  
**From: Kirk Springsted, Vice President, Connecticut Community Providers Association**  
**Re: Labor and Public Employees Public Hearing on Raised Bill No. 6877,  
An Act Concerning A Minimum Work Week for Persons Performing Janitorial  
Work**  
**Date: March 5, 2015**

My name is Kirk Springsted and I am the Vice President for the Connecticut Community Provides Association (CCPA). CCPA represents community-based organizations that provide health and human services for children, adults, and families in multiple areas, including those that provide services and supports for individuals with disabilities. Our members serve more than 500,000 people each year.

I am here to testify on Raised Bill 6877, An Act Concerning A Minimum Work Week for Persons Performing Janitorial Work. This bill would create a minimum work week of thirty hours for individuals who perform janitorial work in buildings of 100,000 square feet or more.

CCPA is working with SEIU 32BJ to propose bill language that would allow workers with disabilities to work less than full time in such locations and specifically on contracts where the janitorial contract falls under the auspices of a state or federal program intended to create work opportunities for people with disabilities. It is our view that for some of these workers a position that is less than full time would be a reasonable accommodation to their disability and we would not want to limit that individual's access to the opportunity or wages offered by working in the custodial industry.

We look forward to working with Committee and SEIU 32BJ to finding language that supports the goals of the bill, but does not preclude work opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

**Connecticut Community Providers Association**

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Testimony of  
**Melodie Peters, President**  
**AFT Connecticut, AFL-CIO**

Labor and Public Employees Committee  
March 5, 2015

**HB 6784 AN ACT EXPANDING PAID SICK LEAVE**

**HB 6932 AN ACT CONCERNING PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE**

**SB 1035 AN ACT CONCERNING BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE**

Good afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Melodie Peters and I am the President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse state federation of union of nearly 30,000 public and private sector employees including state employees, nurses, healthcare workers, teachers and other school personnel.

I am submitting testimony in support of HB 6784 An Act Expanding Paid Sick Leave and HB 6932 An Act Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave

The expansion of paid sick leave and paid family medical leave is good for all the citizens of Connecticut. Employees who are forced to choose between recovering from an illness and missing their rent or other important payment due to a loss in wages are left with a no win scenario. By expanding paid sick leave to cover more employees we are able to provide a peace of mind to allow them to recover from the illness without these worries.

**SB 1035 AN ACT CONCERNING BULLYING IN THE WORK PLACE**

We support SB 1035 An Act Concerning Bullying in the Work Place. Every worker deserves a safe work environment and SB 1035 is a step in the right direction. By taking steps to secure a workplace that is free from abusive conduct we are making a statement that safe and worry free work environments matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on this very important bill. I urge you to support these bills.

March 5, 2015

Good afternoon, Senator Gomes and Representative Tercyak, and honorable members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Liana Cunningham and I am here testifying in support of HB 6932: An Act Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave.

I am here first and foremost as a reproductive justice advocate. The three basic tenants of the reproductive justice framework are the right to have a child, the right not to have a child, and the right to parent the children we have. HB 6932 helps parents parent the children they have by giving them the freedom to take care of their children without worrying about childcare or job security. Without paid family medical leave, parents are forced to either find childcare for their children, which may mean leaving a child in unsafe conditions or spending limited financial resources on quality care, or risk losing their job, impacting their financial security and place in the workforce.

I am also here as someone who is planning on starting a family in the near future. With a husband who travels out of state for work six months of the year, paid family medical leave is of huge importance to me. I am graduating from graduate school in May and am currently looking for a job. Without mandated paid family medical leave, I must consider the benefits a job offers rather than simply the job itself in selecting employment. This may mean foregoing a "dream job" in order to ensure that I have the ability to best care for our future children.

I am seeing firsthand the importance paid family medical leave has with my sister who is 9 months pregnant and does not have access to such leave. By piecing together her sick time and vacation time, she will only be able to take off three weeks of paid leave after her baby is born. In the final weeks of her pregnancy, she is negotiating with her employer for a way that she can both keep her job and spend time with her newborn child during a time of critical bonding and development.

As a life-long Connecticut resident, I see HB 6932 as way for Connecticut to once again be a leader on legislation that supports families and serve as an example for the rest of the country. I urge you to support HB 6932 to promote the health and economic wellbeing of Connecticut families and employees. Thank you.

Liana Cunningham  
2 Rising Trail Drive  
Middletown, CT

**Labor and Public Employees Committee**  
**March 5, 2015**  
**House Bill 6791 – Support**

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

My name is rJo Winch and I am a family child care provider in the North End of Hartford. I am proud to have been a part of the fight leading up to the transformational contract that family child care providers who are members of CSEA SEIU Local 2001 recently negotiated with the Office of Early Childhood.

Home and center based family child care providers are caring for both our children and the future of our state. Recent advances through the Office of Early Childhood have put in place a system of training and career development that will greatly help the children we care for achieve better results in school while reducing the achievement gap. Unfortunately, because there are employers out there who abuse the system and pay their workers far less than they are able to, those parents can't afford to pay more for care and so early educators end up subsidizing that care with our low wages. Bad actors hold us all back. It's a disgrace and it has to stop now.

At CSEA, family child care providers stand side by side with all workers struggling to make ends meet. As large corporations continue to report record profits, we want to make sure that the working men and women who make those profits possible earn a salary on which they can live. Big for-profit companies need to pay decent wages - at least \$15/hour or they should pay a fee to the state to help support the programs, including subsidized child care that low wage workers depend on to survive. Our state is in trouble and doesn't have enough money coming in to support, much less expand access to child care. When large corporations abuse our social safety net to pad their profit margin, that strains our government budgets and hurts our communities. That's why I support House Bill 6791

rJo Winch  
357 Sigourney St  
Hartford, CT 06112

**STEVE BASSO**  
**PLUMBING ☆ HEATING ☆ A/C**

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March 5, 2015

RE: HB 6784 AN ACT EXPANDING PAID SICK LEAVE

I am writing you today to express my concern and disapproval of the raised bill. As a small business owner there is no way to properly abide by these regulations. The additional overhead that is needed to provide the flexibility of an additional week off will cause us to raise our prices at a much higher percentage than a company with 50 employees. They are 5 times larger and can be much more resilient to having to provide these erratic days off.

We already provide paid vacation time, paid holidays and health care for our employees. Vacation scheduling allows us to manage the small staff we have, with planning. Expansion of the paid sick time is another addition to overhead that will be difficult to absorb. Managing the record keeping adds to our payroll expense alone. You will be raising the prices paid by Connecticut homeowners and businesses. Increasing there overhead and overall caost of leaving and working n the State.

Connecticut is a Very difficult state to do business in. As is reflected in our dead last ranking in job creation. Why add yet another anti-business and anti homeowner measure at this time. Entrepreneurs can start a business anywhere. Why start here with all the regulations and mandates when other states just don't have them?

I am a member of a mix group of contractors. Last week I toured one of the members shops located in Raleigh North Carolina. It is a different world. One that is vibrant and growing exponentially. We need to lower the barriers of entry for businesses to grow in this State rather than constructing road blocks.

Sincerely,

Scott Basso

Managing Member

March 5, 2015

TO: Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee

From: Connecticut Bankers Association  
Contacts: Tom Mongellow, Fritz Conway

RE: House Bill 1037 - AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYEE LIENS AGAINST EMPLOYERS FOR UNPAID WAGES.

Position: Oppose

This Bill would allow for the creation of a super priority lien against a property that is owned by a person who has not paid wages to their employee(s).

The CBA is opposed to the super priority lien status of this bill which supersedes all other lien holders including banks and tax liens by municipalities. Indeed the only lien that this bill would not supersede is an IRS tax lien, due to federal law preemption.

When a lender makes a mortgage to a borrower on any property, it is relying on the secured nature of that transaction for its underwriting standards, pricing and servicing of that loan. That secured nature of the loan – is allowed by the lenders first priority lien status on the property.

This bill would create an unfair change in law which would retroactively and negatively impact the ability of lenders to exercise their existing contractual rights to remain in the first lienholder position, in the event of default.

This bill could have immediate and negative impacts on the secondary market mortgage guarantors, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Those two entities provide a steady stream of mortgage capital into the state so consumers can readily obtain mortgage monies. The super lien provisions of HB 1037 would be of immediate concern to those entities, who may very well change their willingness to guarantee and purchase Connecticut mortgages if they can't rely on their first lien priority on existing and future loans.

Additionally, we are concerned that this bills approach would result in negative regulatory scrutiny of existing loans from a "safety and soundness" perspective. That's because of the change in the individual loan's risk profile if the first priority lien status is jeopardized. When this happens during a bank's annual examination, the result is usually the bank having to write down the loan to a lower value or increase the provisions for loan loss against the loan. Either result equals a direct cost to the banks income statement.

From a title insurance perspective, there appears to be many problems with this lien structure, not the least of which is the lack of transparency regarding existence of the lien filed by the Department of Labor. Our lending system and ready access to capital is predicated on the ability to ascertain what liens, if any, are filed on a property that a borrower is seeking to purchase. Notice of the existence and recording of liens is central to this process.

We urge the committee to reject the provisions of House Bill 1037 that hinder transparency and create a super priority lien status against the employer's property.



*Written Testimony for the Labor and Public Employees Committee  
March 5, 2015*

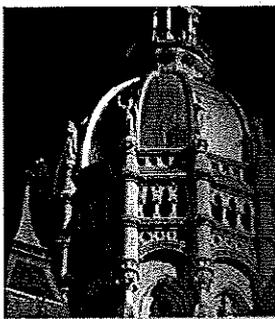
The Department of Social Services offers the following written testimony on a bill that may impact the agency.

**H.B. No. 6878 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION LIABILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SERVICES FROM PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS**

This bill seeks to shift workers' compensation liability for personal care attendants from the consumer to the state, by considering such personal care attendants to be state employees.

Currently, the PCA Council has an active sub work group that is in the midst of studying workers' compensation coverage for personal care attendants. As this work group reviews state statutes, the Department is open and willing to assist with answering any questions that may arise related to personal care attendants and the current compensation process under Medicaid. However, as the bill is currently written, there is no funding in the budget for such an initiative.

For this reason, the Department is unable to support this proposal.



# CCM 2015 Testimony

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## ***LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE***

March 5, 2015

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent 156 towns and cities, representing over 95 percent of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

### **HB 6932, "An Act Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave"**

HB 6932 would, among other things, establish a Family and Medical Leave Compensation Program accompanied by a wide variety of stipulations and requirements. CCM has serious concerns regarding the practicality and implementation of this proposal. Specifically, HB 6932 would impose a new, unnecessary state mandate on municipalities without providing any financial or administrative assistance from the State.

Just yesterday, CCM called on the General Assembly's Appropriations Committee to correct a flaw in the proposed state budget that would result in property taxpayers in nearly 70 towns and cities -- urban, suburban and rural -- receiving less state aid for the next fiscal year, than they are receiving this fiscal year. While CCM is appreciative that the proposed state budget maintains a commitment to property taxpayers by sparing major municipal state grants from cuts -- due to the fact that some state grants are not fully funded, many communities could receive less funding as a result of shifting grant distributions. If the State wants to ensure its economic competitiveness, it must start with sustaining its towns and cities. Funding critical local public services come from two primary sources -- the property tax and state aid, and it is increasingly clear that sustaining state aid is an essential component to thwarting the municipal over-reliance on the property tax.

Simply stated: HB 6932 would be the opposite of property tax relief. Although well-intended, proposals such as HB 6932 would compound local fiscal challenges and place the delivery of critical services such as public safety, education and local public works at risk.

CCM urges the committee to take **no action on HB 6932**.

###

If you have any questions, please contact Robert Labanara, State Relations Manager for CCM, at [rlabanara@ccm-ct.org](mailto:rlabanara@ccm-ct.org).



## ***LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE***

March 5, 2015

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### **HB 6784, "An Act Expanding Paid Sick Leave"**

HB 6784 would, among other things, expand Connecticut's paid sick leave mandate by increasing the amount of allowable accrued hours, and broadening the eligibility and criteria for receiving such special, unfunded state mandated benefits.

Simply stated: HB 6784 is the opposite of property tax relief and would ignore the fiscal realities that towns and cities are forced to manage. Good intentions can have unintended consequences, as would be the case with HB 6784. While sympathetic to the intent of this proposal, local officials have concern regarding the costs associated with expanding special paid sick leave benefits – and are unaware of a statewide public policy need to broaden the scope of the state mandate. CCM is also concerned about the impact HB 6784 could have on local collective bargaining.

In an economy where local officials are struggling to sustain critical services – amidst growing deficits, evaporating revenues, and layoffs – this bill would negatively impact hometown budgets. Year after year, the non-partisan Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) has agreed. OFA has determined, that similar proposals that would impose paid sick leave benefits, would be a "STATE MANDATE" on municipalities -- and that there would be a negative fiscal impact (i.e. "Costs") on already strained local budgets (SB 913, File. No. 76, 2011).

Municipal officials are pleading for tangible relief from onerous, unfunded state mandates – on behalf of Connecticut's local residential and business property taxpayers – and not an expansion of an existing unfunded state mandate.

CCM urges the committee to take **no action on HB 6784.**

###

If you have any questions, please contact Robert Labanara, State Relations Manager for CCM, at [rlabanara@ccm-ct.org](mailto:rlabanara@ccm-ct.org).