EDUCATION COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

FEBRUARY 25, 2015

Senator Winfield , Representative Tercyak and members of the committee, my name is Cameron Champlin and I represent Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Local Union 777. I am here today to testify in favor of SB-910, the Inclusion of Labor History in the Public School Curriculum.

This bill is long over due. Every faction that has had an impact on the formation of this country has been documented and included in our schools curriculum, from the first explorers from the Old World to the space endeavors of today. The only segment that has had significant impact on this country and is not included is the labor movement. We should never forget the horrible conditions that workers had to endure in the sweatshops of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The strife of the American worker in the early years of this country and the sacrifices they had to make to improve these conditions should be known to all. When workers tried to band together to improve their work environment they were beaten with baseball bats, maimed and even killed by personnel hired by their employers. This all happened while police stood by and did nothing.

In Connecticut we had many factories that still stand today, although their purpose has changed. Most of them now house retail outlets or condos. There are many people today that don't know how or why these structures were built. Anywhere there was water power there seemed to be a mill or factory built. We should be proud of Connecticut's role in supplying the goods that where produced by our work force and embrace this history not hide it.

Over the years the 40 hour week, holidays off, overtime pay, safety standards, decent wages and benefits have not come as a gift from employers, they have been implemented because of men and women that fought and suffered so that all workers can enjoy a better life. Their story should be told so that all will be informed of the reason we have such laws today and not just take them for granted.

I ask that you vote to move this bill out of committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this very important bill. If any further information from me is needed I can be reached at (860) 287-0020 or email camc@att.net.