



**Testimony of Win Heimer, Executive Vice President  
Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans**

**Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly  
February 26, 2015**

**In support of SB 910 - An Act Concerning The Inclusion Of The History Of The  
Worker In The Public School Curriculum.**

SENATOR WINFIELD, REPRESENTATIVE TERCYAK AND MEMBERS OF THE  
COMMITTEE:

THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY...

MY NAME IS WIN HEIMER. I AM A RESIDENT OF WEST HARTFORD AND  
THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CONNECTICUT ALLIANCE FOR  
RETIRED AMERICANS. THE ALLIANCE IS THE STATE AFFILIATE OF THE  
NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS AND COMPRISES 50,000  
MEMBERS IN CONNECTICUT.

WE URGE YOUR SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 910- AN ACT CONCERNING  
THE INCLUSION OF THE HISTORY OF THE WORKER IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL  
CURRICULUM.

I BELIEVE IT WAS FORMER UNITED STATES SENATOR JOE LIEBERMAN  
WHO ONCE SAID "THERE ARE TWO THINGS THAT MADE THIS COUNTRY  
GREAT: PUBLIC EDUCATION AND LABOR UNIONS. THEY BUILT THE  
MIDDLE CLASS."

BUT HOW MANY OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE KNOW THIS? PRACTICALLY  
NONE OF THIS GENERATION KNOWS THAT IT WAS WORKERS WHO  
ORGANIZED INTO A LABOR MOVEMENT THAT PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN  
PROMOTING WORKPLACE SAFETY, THE 40-HOUR 5-DAY WORK WEEK,  
SOCIAL SECURITY, THE MINIMUM WAGE, AN END TO CHILD LABOR... THE  
LIST GOES ON AND ON. THESE ARE BENEFITS AND CONDITIONS THAT WE  
TAKE FOR GRANTED...AND THAT ARE RAPIDLY BEING ERODED.

I'LL BET THAT A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T EVEN KNOW THAT A  
NATIONAL LAW THAT WAS PASSED DURING THEIR GRANDPARENT'S DAYS  
AND IS STILL ON THE BOOKS TODAY ALLOWS WORKERS - NO MATTER  
THE SETTING - TO COME TOGETHER TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH  
THEIR EMPLOYER OVER WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS.

AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR HISTORY IS BEING LOST. PEOPLE OF MY GENERATION UNDERSTAND THAT REAL BATTLES WERE WAGED FOR THESE ADVANCES AND THAT PEOPLE LITERALLY DIED FOR EXAMPLE TO GAIN AN EIGHT-HOUR WORK DAY. ORGANIZED WORKERS HAVE BEEN A PART OF OUR NATION FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. AFTER ALL, THE FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS MET IN CARPENTERS' HALL IN PHILADELPHIA, A UNION HALL.

THIS PROPOSED BILL MERELY REQUIRES THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION "ASSIST AND ENCOURAGE" LOCAL AND REGIONAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION TO INCLUDE WORKERS' HISTORY AND LABOR LAW INTO THEIR CURRICULA. THE LANGUAGE WOULD BE INSERTED IN CURRENT STATUTE THAT SIMILARLY ENCOURAGES BUT DOES NOT REQUIRE TEACHING OF TOPICS SUCH AS THE HOLOCAUST, THE GREAT FAMINE IN IRELAND, NATIVE AMERICAN AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY.

GOOD TEACHERS AND GOOD TEACHING MATERIALS CAN EASILY INTEGRATE WORKER STUDIES WITH OTHER SUBJECTS TO MAKE IT RELEVANT TO TODAY'S STUDENTS. PASSAGE OF SENATE BILL 910 CAN HELP MAKE THAT HAPPEN.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.