



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican
Affairs Commission

18-20 Trinity Street
 Hartford, CT 06106
 Tel. (860) 240-8330
 Fax (860) 240-0315
 E-Mail: lprac@ega.ct.gov
 Web Site: www.ega.ct.gov/lprac

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 5th, 2015
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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.¹ 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.²
- Nearly 250,000 foreign-born residents are naturalized citizens (7 percent of total population).³
- The top five countries of birth for the foreign-born population are (1) Jamaica, (2) India, (3) Mexico, (4) Poland, and (5) China.⁴
- In Connecticut, 17 percent of marriages are interracial compared to 15 percent nationwide.⁵
- The Asian population grew by 39 percent from 2000 to 2010.⁶
- Within 15 years, Hispanics will account for 1-in-5 of the working-age population.⁷

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 2005.⁸

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.

¹ Connecticut State Data Center, Connecticut Population Projections 2015-2025, Nov. 2012

² ACS 2013 1-yr DP02

³ ACS 2013 1-yr S0201

⁴ ACS 2013 1-yr B05006

⁵ Pew Research Center, The Rise of Intermarriage, February 16, 2012

⁶ Census 2000 and Census 2010 QT-P5

⁷ Connecticut's Changing Demographics Foreshadow Declining Workforce Income

⁸ The Hartford Courant, Study Prompts Racism Charge, September 29, 2005