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CONNECTICUT

TESTIMONY OF
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS (NFIB)
OPPOSING
SB-984 (Section 1), AAC THE UNIONIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS...
BEFORE THE
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
MARCH 3, 2015

A non-profit, non-partisan organization founded in 1943, NFIB is Connecticut's and the nation's leading small-business association. In Connecticut, NFIB represents thousands of members and their employees. NFIB membership is scattered across the state and ranges from sophisticated high technology enterprises to "Main Street" small businesses to single-person "Mom & Pop" shops that operate in traditional ways. NFIB's mission is "To promote and protect the right of its members to own, operate, and grow their businesses." On behalf of those small- and independent- job-providers in Connecticut, I offer the following comments:

NFIB/Connecticut has significant concerns with Section 1 of SB-984 and urges deletion of the changes in this section. The effect of bracketing the text in lines 12-13, and 16 would significantly alter longstanding law and practice by removing the existing exclusion for farm and agricultural employees pertaining to collective bargaining provisions. The changes contemplated in this section are unnecessary and would impact many NFIB/Connecticut member farms, growers, and other related small businesses as well.

Most farmers in Connecticut are small business owners. As it is, many of them are just getting by. Land acquisition costs, property taxes, energy costs, labor costs, supply and production costs, just to name a few, are already high enough and make it difficult for farming and agricultural operations to succeed in Connecticut. Fortunately, over the last several years, some agricultural operations are making a comeback and providing vital contributions to our economy and our communities. Any legislation should be aimed at further assisting these small businesses, not interfering with their right to own, operate and grow their businesses. Removing the longstanding exclusion for agricultural employees would put a further strain on Connecticut's small businesses engaged in farming operations and make our state less competitive with the vast majority of other states in this regard. Small businesses know what to expect and how to comply with Connecticut's existing collective bargaining laws, and discourages changes that would expand the law as well as make Connecticut appear even more uncompetitive with other states.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and NFIB urges lawmakers to reject Section 1 of SB-984.