



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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Testimony of Lori Pelletier, Executive Secretary-Treasurer Connecticut AFL-CIO before the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee

February 11, 2015

Senator Duff and Representative Janowski and members of the committee I am Lori Pelletier and I serve as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO and I am here on behalf of our 900 affiliated local unions who represent nearly 220,000 working men and women.

This afternoon I have the distinct honor of testifying in support of my friend, colleague and mentor Sharon Palmer for the appointment as Labor Commissioner. Commissioner Palmer brings an immense wealth of knowledge, skill and compassion to the Labor department. She understands the needs of workers both union and non, and she also understands what the business community needs to survive and prosper. As a longtime member of the Waterford RTM she has first hand knowledge of the important role government plays in this dance between capital and labor.

In 1994 I first met Commissioner Palmer. As a young women union activist it was quite intimidating going to meeting with union leaders who were mostly men and were much more senior to me. Sharon was a warm and friendly face for this young activist, and her advice and guidance is in big part as to being where I am today. Thank you Sharon. But I wasn't the only one Commissioner Palmer was mentor to. Her leadership at the Connecticut AFLCIO helped shape our policy and priorities for the last twenty years.

We are at a critical juncture here in Connecticut. Study after study shows that our workforce over the next couple of decades will be made up of workers with middle skill abilities. These workers who have more than a high school education but less than a four year degree will be the cornerstone of our economy. Commissioner Palmer is well suited to lead our department of labor by connecting our education system including our under utilized Votech system with the needs of employers. If we prepare properly Connecticut can lead the way to a robust workforce.

On behalf of our affiliates and their members we Thank Governor Malloy for his selection of Sharon Palmer to be the next Labor Commissioner. Sharon's leadership, laughter and patient will be missed at the Connecticut AFLCIO Executive Board meetings, but we look forward to continuing our work with her and the Department.

Thank you to this committee for scheduling this public hearing and if you have any questions I would be happy to address them at your convenience.

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