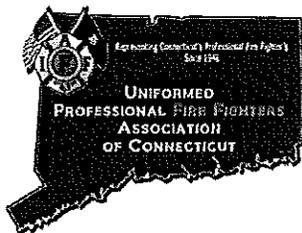


**UNIFORMED PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT**  
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Good afternoon, Honorable Chairmen Rep. Terzcyak and Sen. Winfield, Honorable members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, my name is Richard Hart. I represent the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of Connecticut which represents 43 Local affiliates of the International Association of Firefighters. Membership in the UPPFA is comprised of approximately 4,000 Union firefighters in Connecticut.

I am speaking today in opposition to Proposed H.B. 5211 ACT CONCERNING UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES AND ARBITRATION DECISION TIMELINES.. Collective bargaining and binding arbitration are the foundations of Municipal employee rights under MERA. I know this to be true because in 2001, the City of Waterbury employees lost their collective bargaining rights under Special Act 01-1 and the draconian treatment of the Labor Unions that ensued was unprecedented in this State. These fundamental rights are crucial to creating an even playing field for both the employees and municipalities. The system as it stands now works, for better or worse. Any change to binding arbitration would be detrimental to the collective bargaining process and the ability for Municipalities and unions to settle contracts in a mutually beneficial manner. Thank you for your time.

Richard Hart

DIRECTOR  
Legislative/Political Affairs