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February 24, 2015
Testimony by Representative Mitch Bolinsky
Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee
Supporting Proposed House Bills 6250 and 6251

Thank you, Honorable Co-Chairs, Senator Winfield & Rep. Tercyak; Ranking Members Senator Hwang & Rep. Rutigliano; as well as the entire Labor Committee for your consideration today of proposed HB 6250 and 6251.

- **HB 6250, AN ACT CONCERNING PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS AND THE PREVAILING WAGE STANDARD**, will encourage and reward private, charitable investment in projects where a benefactor or benefactress seeks to "give-back" to a community. My home town, Newtown, has a storied past of philanthropy which is highlighted by our very own "Town Benefactress" Mary Elizabeth Hawley, who's generosity and love for our little town in the 1920's and early 1930's, resulted in bequests of Edmond Town Hall, The C.H. Booth Memorial Library, Hawley School, Newtown Community Cemetery, Hawley Pond, Hawley Bridge and more to her home town. She turned our little town into big-town.

One of the keys to Mary Hawley's ability to maximize her gifting was the simplicity of giving in the early 20th century. She worked together with town officials and had significant input in designing facilities and public places that not just honored the memories of beloved family members but she also maintained the flexibility to select contractors and micro-manage project costs in such that allowed a certain "budget-stretching" effect that today might be termed a "design build" kind of project oversight. She was truly visionary.

HB-6250 seeks to amend section 31-53 of the general statutes to exempt such philanthropically-funded projects from the calculation used to determine whether a public works project must abide by prevailing wage laws. Quite simply, it would allow people like Mary Elizabeth Hawley to keep some skin in the game and lovingly guide such projects, if they so choose, as well as maintaining a well-supervised, public/private collaboration in cost-effective best practices to accomplish their philanthropic goals, within the bounds of all applicable local land use, building code and plans of conservation and development.

- **HB 6251, AN ACT DOUBLING THE PREVAILING WAGE THRESHOLDS**, will provide local tax relief by doubling the current threshold amounts that determine when public works projects must abide by prevailing wage laws. Section 31-53 of the general statutes would be amended to increase the threshold amounts for public works projects required to abide by the prevailing wage laws from \$400,000 to \$800,000 for new construction and \$100,000 to \$200,000 for remodeling. 2015 is the perfect year to perform the revaluing.

The goal of this proposal is to make an inflationary adjustment to prevailing wage thresholds, allowing towns to properly value needed projects on an "Apples to Apples" basis. Coincidentally, at year-end 2014, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to 236.7 and is now exactly 100 basis points greater than when the last PW threshold calibration was made, in 1991, when CPI was 136.2.

Thank you for your time and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Respectfully,

Representative Mitch Bolinsky