



Over 45 years advocating for the New Haven community.
169 Grand Avenue, New Haven, CT 06513
203.787.0191 www.juntainc.org

Written Testimony to the Labor and Public Employees Committee In Support of:

SB 858: An Act Concerning Employees Who Customarily And Regularly Receive Gratuities And The Minimum Fair Wage;

HB 6784: An Act Expanding Paid Sick Leave;

HB 6791: An Act Concerning Workers' Wages At Large Corporations;

HB 6932: An Act Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave; and

HB 6933: An Act Concerning Predictable Scheduling For Employees.

March 5, 2015

Co-Chairs Gomes and Tercyak and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important package of bills. Junta for Progressive Action has been serving Greater New Haven since 1969. We serve thousands of families every year, and have become a crucial provider of support and opportunity in the community. In addition to crucial safety net services and case management, we also provide job skills and language assistance.

These bills will go a long way to providing workers more stability and financial security for their families. Women and people of color, a vast majority of our clients, are more likely to be employed in low-wage and below minimum wage jobs, often by employers who deny them paid sick days, and in part-time jobs that lack any scheduling stability. These conditions perpetuate the cycle of poverty despite families' best efforts to work hard and make a better living.

SB 858: We support this bill in its concept, however it still does not go far enough. We support a complete elimination of the tip credit, guaranteeing all workers a minimum wage regardless of outside factors that often affect tips. Tipped workers are some of the most vulnerable low-wage workers in our state. Unlike other workers, the earnings of a tipped worker are influenced by their shift, the day of the week and even the weather.

HB 6784: Although the Paid Sick Days law passed in 2011 marked important progress, it should be expanded to protect all workers, not just those who work for larger businesses and in certain sectors. The issue of paid sick days is one that protects the entire state, not only the workers, but the customers too.

HB 6791: This legislation would address many workers and their families who are trying hard to make a living, but are still forced to enroll in public assistance just to make ends meet. Holding Connecticut's largest employers accountable for paying their employees a living wage will mean

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more money flowing into local economies, more revenue in state coffers, and more financial security for working families.

HB 6932: Paid Family and Medical Leave would provide critical support for working families when they need it most. Many of our clients support family members in other countries. This legislation would make it much easier for them to travel to care for a loved one that is ailing or dying. This is no trivial matter, because sometimes the grief of not being able to say goodbye can be a larger burden than the loss itself. Importantly, as workers would self-fund such a program, this bill also puts very little cost on employers.

HB 6933: We support this legislation because it creates an opportunity for more stability for working families. Too many workers are subject to fluctuations in wages from week to week because of employers' unfair scheduling practices. This is a particularly difficult situation for working parents who must make arrangements for childcare. Workers deserve predictability in their schedules.

Respectfully submitted,
Nick Torres
Director of Advocacy