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Written Testimony for Labor and Employees Committee Public Hearings March 3, 2015 and March 5, 2015

HB 6934 - AN ACT CONCERNING WAGES PAID TO INDIVIDUALS PROVIDING FOOD, BUILDING, PROPERTY OR EQUIPMENT SERVICES TO MUNICIPALITIES.

HB-6877- AN ACT CONCERNING A MINIMUM WORK WEEK FOR PERSONS PERFORMING JANITORIAL WORK

The Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) is a non-profit professional association that represents school business officials (SBOs) throughout the State of Connecticut. SBOs work closely with school boards, administrators, staff, public officials and communities; and are responsible for most aspects of school business and operations. This includes, but not limited to, developing and monitoring school district budgets, as well as overseeing school maintenance and operations.

CASBO opposes both bills since they represent unfunded mandates that increase operating costs at a time when all schools are struggling to meet many financial challenges already in place. In addition, these bills unnecessarily interfere with contractor negotiations and the collective bargaining process.

HB-6934 requires that wages, inclusive of benefits, for food service, building, property or equipment service contracts be set by state law which eliminates one of the important negotiating tools for these contracts. Contractors will either not bid on these contracts or simply include these mandated increases as starting point for school or municipality contracts. Either way, such actions will increase operating costs for schools. This is counterproductive and less efficient. Such contracts should be negotiated using open bidding process already in place without new restrictions as proposed by this bill.

HB 6877 imposes a minimum of a thirty-hour work week, with related benefits, on janitorial work for schools and municipalities. This not only will increase costs for schools and municipalities but also will remove much of the flexibility needed for successful operations. Many schools have used part-time staff to deal with ever expanding school year schedules and seasonal work. Part time work also is included in many current contracts and provides flexibility for schools and employees alike.

Many part time workers enjoy the flexibility of these reduced schedules to accommodate family obligations, enjoy retirement without the need for a full time work commitment or pursue other interests. This bill could very well result in part time employees being laid off which would be the exact opposite intent of the bill. It is important to employers and employees alike that flexibility of using part time employees, where it is warranted, remains in place. Any such changes should be addressed through good faith bargaining and not another state mandate.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on these important matters.