

Testimony of  
Amanda Flaherty  
Iron Worker

February 24, 2015

Honorable Senator Winfield, Honorable Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor Committee.

My name is Amanda Flaherty and I am a proud iron worker who is opposed to any legislation weakening or eliminating the prevailing wage as well as any bills that would limit unemployment benefits.

There was a year where jobs in Ct were scares and I was driving out of state for work and most of the time they were small jobs only lasting a week or two! Sometimes a company will bring you in for a short period of time because they need your special skill (welding, fabricating, etc). When I would branch out to work I was spending more time on the road than I was at home with my family. When we work we work hard for our money- we don't get vacation time or sick days. We aren't even guaranteed 40 hours a week! We are the ones that work out in the elements, and in 'unsafe' weather we don't work. When you're a 'Mommy' (such as myself), working construction, and your child gets sick, I am the one that stays home with her, which means time out of work (and no 40 hour work week). Also, it usually means a Doctors' visit; luckily we have a great health care plan. Having health care makes life easier knowing when my family gets sick our health care plan will provide us with the best care at minimal cost to me/us.

While working on a prevailing wage job I am able to bring home enough money to live comfortably and still put money into savings accounts for my daughter's future and my retirement. That little bit of money I put into my 'retirement' savings account each week, from being on a prevailing wage job, is just a little buffer to go along with my pension! This is not possible on non-prevailing wage jobs. I am unable to save for myself and my family's future.

When there are no jobs in Ct and I was unemployed I was only making 1/2 of what I would normally make. If unemployment was to ever be altered so that I had to wait a week to become eligible for unemployment benefits, I would be at a loss. Since jobs can be sporadic and short term, making the requirement that a person shall not be eligible for unemployment benefits beyond the time period specified for which a person was hired, I would be in trouble. Jobs may only last for a week or two, due to the nature of my work. If I was only eligible for two weeks of unemployment because I took a two week job, then I might not have enough time to find another job, or enough assistance to support my family. We don't live an extravagant life but we do live comfortably, meaning that we can save for our future and take care of our family when working on prevailing wage projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience with you.