



**Testimony of Matthew Brokman
Legislative and Political Representative, Council 4 AFSCME
Labor & Public Employees Committee Hearing
SB 910: AAC the Inclusion of the History of the Worker in
the Public School Curriculum
February 26, 2015**

Good afternoon, Senator Winfield, Representative Tercyak, and members of the Labor Committee. My name is Matthew Brokman. I am a Legislative and Political Representative of Council 4 AFSCME. Our union represents 32,000 public service workers.

Council 4 AFSCME is in support of SB 910: An Act Concerning the Inclusion of the History of the Worker in the Public School Curriculum.

What we are really talking about with this bill is the story of how we became the country we are today, and the state we are today.

“Worker history” is the history of how we won WWII. It was a labor leader, Walter Reuther of the UAW, who pushed American manufacturers to turn their vast factories into war production machines enabling us to win the war.

“Worker history” is the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his life while standing up for striking Memphis sanitation workers as part of his Poor People’s Campaign to make sure that every citizen has the ability to exercise their rights in our democracy.

“Worker history” is the history of how our great infrastructure projects were built. It was steel forged in Homestead PA that went into some of our greatest structures that are still standing today.

“Worker history” is also the history of how unions have helped transform Connecticut’s economy by leading the fight for collective bargaining rights, family and medical leave, workers compensation, unemployment insurance, pay equity and some of the strongest job safety standards in the country.

And “worker history” is also the history of union workers who helped build Connecticut’s manufacturing base – and strengthened our social compact – at factories like Olin-Winchester in my home city of New Haven.

What this bill does is enable teachers to tell these stories.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.