



INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

JULIE KUSHNER
DIRECTOR

REGION 9A UAW
111 SOUTH ROAD
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032-2560
PHONE: (860) 674-0143
FAX: (860) 674-1164
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® DENNIS WILLIAMS, President



GARY CASTEEL, Secretary-Treasurer

Senate Bill 391

AAC The Recoupment of State Costs Attributable to Low Wage Employers Support

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and Members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Beverley Brakeman. I am the political director for UAW Region 9A and I am here on behalf of our Director, Julie Kushner, and several hundred childhood educators in Stamford at the Early Learning Center and in Hartford at the Community Renewal Team.

We are here to urge your support for SB 391 – a bill which would require Connecticut’s largest low-wage employers to contribute to the state’s costs for services provided to low-wage workers and their families.

It is estimated that passage of this bill could bring millions of dollars into the state, earmarked for the expansion and improvement of the state’s childcare and healthcare programs.

Childhood educators, despite being charged with the important and challenging work of caring for the well-being of our children while we work, are under-paid, under-resourced and over-worked. In the two centers where we represent childhood educators, the majority are women and minorities and are living paycheck to paycheck. And with new requirements to further their education in order to stay employed and increase their salaries, they are falling further and further behind.

By way of example, at our Stamford Early Learning Center, a starting teacher makes \$33,300 or \$17.08 per hour. Yet, according to Connecticut’s Permanent Commission on the Status of Women’s 2015 Self Sufficiency Standard Report, a family of one adult and one pre-school child needs to make \$74,600 annually to meet their basic living needs. For one adult alone to meet their basic needs in Stamford, their annual salary should be \$38,623.¹ These teachers, even with no children of their own, are not making a living wage.

As a CT taxpayer, we are all subsidizing large, profitable corporations whose employees are paid such low wages themselves that they need public assistance. For example, according to the Office of Legislative Research 2011 Report “Husky Employers,”² 28,000 employees of companies like Walmart, Dunkin’ Donuts, McDonalds, Home Depot, and Macy’s are receiving their healthcare through the state’s Husky A program. This is simply wrong.

This bill will help the state’s budget crisis by raising revenue while calling on the state’s largest low wage employers to pay their fair share.

Please pass this bill. Thank you.

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¹ Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, Self Sufficiency Standards Report, 2015.

² OLR Report Husky Employers, Robin Cohen, 7/2011