

Connecticut General Assembly – Human Services Committee
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

**Testimony of the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition
March 8, 2016
In Support of S.B. 391:
AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOUPMENT OF STATE COSTS
ATTRIBUTABLE TO LOW WAGE EMPLOYERS**

Dear Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and members of the Human Services Committee:

The Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) fully supports S.B. 391, an act that requires the largest low-wage employers in the state to contribute to the state's costs for services provided to low-wage workers and their families.

Child care and health care services are essential for many low-wage workers. These public assistance programs ensure that their children, disabled and elderly family members are cared for. Child care and home health care workers are themselves often low paid and struggle to support their own families. When you know your family is healthy and taken care of, you're better able to be more productive, and happier at work.

S.B. 391 is business-friendly. This bill strengthens child care and health care services that the companies' with 500 employees or more rely on so said employees can show up to their jobs ready to work and work productively. The small fee required by the bill would be a very small fraction of these corporations' cost of doing business; the goal of S.B. 391 is simply to recover some of the costs that the state bears when these corporations pay wages low enough that their employees cannot fully support their families. S.B. 391 shows that employers should be responsible for paying wages that their employees can live on.

Connecticut's high cost of living means that workers paid less than \$15 per hour simply are not earning enough to meet their families' basic needs without assistance. Connecticut's minimum wage of \$9.15 in 2015 provided less than half of a living wage for a single adult and only 22% of the living wage for a single adult with two children. In Bridgeport, a household must earn \$24.67 an hour in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment. When employers pay their employees less than \$15 an hour, it is simply not enough to get by in the state of Connecticut. Workers earning less than \$15 in Connecticut are:

- Adults, not teens: 90% are age 20 or older, and 36% are age 40 or older.
- 58% are women.
- 26% have children.

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- 51% work full-time.
- On average, they earn more than half of their families' income.

Last year, the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) estimated S.B. 391 would bring in up to \$305.1 million annually once fully implemented. In a time when our state budget has a deficit to hundreds of millions of dollars, a bill that brings in revenue such as S.B. 391 should not be overlooked. BCAC urges your support in passing S.B. 391. Thank you for your time and consideration.