
Labor and Public Employees Committee
March 3, 2016
House Bill 5370: An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage

Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, Ranking Members, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My Name is Bill Buhler, I am a resident of Cromwell and I am here to testify in favor of House Bill 5370.

To meet basic needs in Connecticut a single resident of New Haven County needs to make a yearly income of \$24,700. That translates to \$11.88 per hour. Workers today making the minimum wage of \$9.60 earn just under \$20,000 a year based on a 40 hour work week. Since this doesn't cover basic necessities they supplement this income by applying for state subsidies, by working several jobs, or both.

I don't believe small business owners would be hurt by a statewide increase in the minimum wage. Research shows that low income families spend nearly all they make, so the cost of gradually raising wages would be offset by increases in customer purchases.

Large retail chains can easily afford wage increases. Average compensation for the CEO of a fast food chain ranges between 7 and 25 million dollars a year and the CEO to worker pay ratio can exceed 1000 to 1.

Aside from the stress that it puts on families, low wages are a wet blanket on the economy. Consumer spending hasn't risen above inflation for at least 13 years nor has sales tax revenue. Low and middle income workers must use what little they make to cover basic necessities. The extraordinary income which flows to extremely wealthy individuals doesn't help the economy because the rich don't spend much. Those eager to spend don't have the money, and those that have the money have no reason to spend. That is the problem we are facing and this is why it is important to pass House Bill 5370.

William Buhler
Cromwell, CT