

Connecticut General Assembly – Labor and Public Employees Committee
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

**Testimony of the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition
March 3, 2016**

In Support of H.B. 5370: AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM FAIR WAGE

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

The Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) fully supports H.B. 5370, an act increasing the minimum wage incrementally to fifteen dollars an hour.

When Connecticut passed legislation that would raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 by January 2017, we joined other states in making national headlines. While that was, and is, a progressive law, more progression is needed to ensure the safety of our state's singles and families.

In order for a family's basic needs to be met, with extra money for emergencies, the living wage for Connecticut residents would need to start at \$40.89 per hour (for a family of three). 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, the estimated living wage for a family of three is \$32.36 per hour. Fifteen dollars an hour would, at the very least, match nearly half of the recommended living wage (for a family of three).

Raising the minimum wage not only raises the living standards for our most vulnerable working families, it helps lift the economy by increasing consumer spending, locally and statewide. Raising the minimum wage to fifteen dollars per hour can conceivably bring billions of dollars into the state's economy; a figure that cannot possibly be ignored given Connecticut's current projected 2016-19 fiscal year deficits.

The majority of Connecticut's workers are adults with families to provide for; \$10.10 an hour simply isn't enough to lift full-time workers out of poverty. Because wages do not match the cost of living in Connecticut, individuals and families then have to rely on Medicaid, food stamps, subsidized housing, and other forms of assistance that surpass the price of modestly raising the minimum wage. We must strengthen our economic labor conditions for the good of everyone in Connecticut. BCAC urges your support in passing H.B. 5370.

Thank you for your time.

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