



Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association

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George Motel

Testimony before the Labor Committee

In Opposition of HB 5370 AA Increasing the Fair Minimum Wage

Good afternoon Representative Tercyak and Senator Gomes and members of the Labor Committee, my name is George Motel, and my wife and I are the owners of Sunset Meadow Vineyards in Goshen, CT. We started our vineyard about twenty years ago by purchasing a non producing farm. We began to plant vines and for the first two years of operation we sold fruit to other CT Vineyards. Today we have over 35 acres of vines planted and produce about 5,500 cases per year. I am here in my capacity as the President of the CT Vineyard and Winery Association (CVWA) and I am also a member of the Farm Winery Development Council, whose purpose is to foster and promote agriculture, specifically grape growing. I would like to voice my opposition to HB 5370 AA Increasing the Fair Minimum Wage.

Many of the small wine farms in Connecticut are family run businesses, not your typical corporate entities. Increasing administrative costs, like minimum wage, could potentially be devastating to these farms. Our industry is one of hard work and we are at the mercy of the elements in order to make our businesses successful.

Wine is a luxury purchase, consumers do not need it to live. If the minimum wage were to increase, many wineries would have to raise prices in a lagging economy. We do not believe this is the right solution for our businesses or to help bring Connecticut out of the recession. The current statute requires a minimum wage increase next January, even if this proposed bill is defeated. We ask you to reconsider increasing the minimum further than what is currently on the books. Please vote against HB 5370.