



Testimony of
John Brady, Executive Vice President
AFT Connecticut, AFL-CIO

Labor and Public Employees Committee Hearing
March 3, 2016

HB 5370 AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM FAIR WAGE

Good afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is John Brady and I am a Registered Nurse with 21 years of Emergency Room experience. I am also proud to be the Executive Vice President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse union of more than 30,000 members. It is on their behalf that I testify before you today in favor of 5370, An act increasing the minimum fair wage.

I speak in favor of this bill.

Study after study have shown that increasing the wages of the lowest paid members of society is the most effective way of boosting the economy because our lower paid citizens must spend a larger percentage of their incomes just to survive. In fact, in most towns in Connecticut the living wage is already near \$22/hour and anything under this amount requires assistance from the state just to provide food and shelter. Raising the minimum fair wage to \$15/hour by 2022 will continue to leave these citizens in a perilous situation, but not raising it would be even worse.

Even if raising the minimum fair wage was not such a boost to the economy, it would remain the right thing to do. No Connecticut citizen who works hard should live in poverty. Certainly, this bill does not go far enough to address the questions of income inequality, but it is a step in the right direction. I urge your support.

Testimony re HB05370

Entry level positions are intended to serve as an introduction to the workforce, perhaps a place to get your foot in the door that can provide opportunity to move up in the company through hard work and dedication. Our current company policy to reward good workers with pay level increases – potentially starting a carrier.

If employers are forced to hire at \$15 an hour, it's financially irresponsible to be bringing on these inexperienced workers because they simply aren't able to produce at levels that equal the cost. Rather than learning on the job for low wages, these workers are now going to face unemployment because no employer is going to take on the financial burden. This bill will cause further job losses in an already not stable economy. Connecticut can't afford that!

Thank you,
Cary Gagnon