



March 2, 2016

To Senator Edwin A. Gomes, Representative Peter A. Tercyak and Members of the General Assembly Committee on Labor and Public Employees:

The Connecticut Center for a New Economy supports the Better Jobs Act, **House Bill 5378**, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STANDARD RATE OF WAGES.

The average income for the top 1% in Connecticut is \$2,683,600, while the average for the other 99%, the rest of income earners, is \$52,603. The ratio between these two figures is higher than in any other state. (Economic Policy Institute, 2012) This extreme inequity, which crushes the spirit of our State, is why we created the Standard Wage Act. The General Assembly wanted to make sure the State did not exacerbate inequity and enter contracts for services that held families in poverty. As our economy changes the Standard Wages need to change with it. The first people we see when we enter any State building are the security personnel. The Standard Wage Act needs to include them. The first people we see when we enter Connecticut through Bradley Airport are security personnel. The Standard Wage Act needs to make it clear that they are covered

Further, the Standard Wage Act must be modified to avoid exacerbating gender wage inequity. Housekeeping is a job traditionally associated with women and is undervalued relative to comparable, even identical, work done by light cleaners. The Standard Wage needs to reclassify the work of housekeepers as light cleaning.

Further, agency contracts should incorporate annual price adjustments to ensure wages do not improperly stagnate.

These changes, codified in H.B. 5378, are simple and straight-forward, and they are essential to the well-being of families who earn the Standard Wage.

Submitted by Renae Reese, Executive Director, CCNE, 860-280-7320,
reanae@ctneweconomy.org

The Connecticut Center for a New Economy (CCNE) promotes economic, social and racial justice for Connecticut's unemployed and working people.