



Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
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Before the Committee on Labor and Public Employees
March 3, 2016

Testifying in support of SB 223
AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYEE WAGES AND DISCIPLINARY SUSPENSIONS FOR HARASSMENT OR
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Good afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, Senator Hwang, Representative Rutigliano and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

CBIA supports SB 223.

SB 223 makes two minor changes to Connecticut law. Section one of the bill would eliminate the requirement that new businesses submit an application to the labor department for permission to pay employees on an "every other week" basis. Currently, an application needs to be filed and approved in order to pay employees on anything other than a weekly basis. This is an unnecessary burden on new businesses, particularly given that the vast majority of businesses pay wages every other week rather than weekly. Under this suggested language, an employer would still have to apply to the labor department to pay employees on any other schedule.

I would note that I believe a corresponding change may also be needed in Connecticut General Statutes sections 31-71i.

Section two of the bill would allow businesses to suspend without pay salaried workers that violate an employer's written policy on harassment or workplace violence. Currently, an employer can suspend without pay an hourly worker for such violation, but not a salaried employee. A salaried employee can be suspended for violating such policies, but the employer is still required to pay that individual. Federal law allows both salaried and hourly employees to be treated the same in this respect, but Connecticut law does not. We ask that you give Connecticut employers the tools to treat both hourly and salaried employees the same when it comes to dealing with workplace harassment or violence issues.

Thank you for considering these two small reforms. We urge the committee to favorably report SB 223.