



Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
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Before the Committee on Labor and Public Employees
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**Testifying on SB 393
AN ACT CONCERNING DOMESTIC WORKERS**

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 opposes SB 393. It is our belief that this proposal, if enacted as is, would serve to eliminate employment opportunities for domestic workers in Connecticut, rather than provide them with any benefit.

Section 3 of SB 393 deems an individual that pays a domestic worker \$1,000 in a calendar quarter to be an employer under the workers' compensation statutes. Thus, at \$10 per hour, an individual that employs a domestic worker just over eight hours a week for three months would be required to purchase a workers' compensation insurance policy. These policies are prohibitively expensive for most people. Although I believe the goal of this section is to protect domestic workers, this requirement in reality will reduce the number of people who can afford to hire them.

Section 4 of SB 393 treats employers of domestic workers differently than any other employer in the state. Under the bill, employers of a single domestic worker would fall under the jurisdiction of CHRO, whereas every other employer in the state needs at least three employees to fall under CHRO's jurisdiction. It is unclear why these workers need to fall under CHRO's jurisdiction, or whether CHRO even has the resources to handle this potentially increased workload.

Section 7 would also impose new paid leave requirements on employers of domestic workers. The bill would require part-time domestic workers to receive 72 hours of paid leave per year, and full-time domestic workers to receive one hundred twenty hours of paid leave per year. Presumably, employers of domestic workers would employ the domestic worker for a greater number of hours each week if they could afford it. This bill, however, makes them pay for that domestic worker even when they are providing no service at all.

Section 8 prevents the employer from entering the portion of their property occupied by a domestic worker, or monitoring any communication of the domestic worker. Ultimately, this strips the employer from his or her ability to prevent criminal activity from occurring in their home, leaving the employer open to possible property seizure by law enforcement officials in the event criminal activity is occurring. Employers in every other industry are allowed to monitor employee work areas and communications--why should this industry be any different?

Section 9 requires the domestic worker to be given up to fourteen days notice of termination, which is unusual for any industry employing at-will employees. Fortunately, this requirement does not apply in instances where

the domestic worker engaged in deliberate misconduct. This section ignores the possibility that a domestic worker could be terminated for a host of other unintentional acts--such as the injury or death of a child under their care as a result of negligence. In the event of such a situation, it seems unreasonably burdensome to ask the former employer to provide up to fourteen days notice of termination.

While I have noted a few of the problematic aspects of SB 393, I recognize the extremely important service domestic workers provide, as well as the importance of the industry as a whole. However, existing law already provides adequate legal protections for when problems arise. The additional legal requirements provided in SB 393 are far more likely to make the employment of domestic workers too costly and administratively burdensome for most people—which as a result will mean far fewer job opportunities for the individuals engaged in this industry.