



Council 4 AFSCME Testimony – Appropriations Committee, February 19, 2016

Support for Legislative Commissions

Council 4 AFSCME urges you to preserve and fully fund the six legislative commissions to the state budget: African American, Latino, Aging, Asian, Children's and Women. These commissions share a quest for economic justice. They are too important to give up. And, in the time of economic disaster that we're going through they are needed more than ever. Total cost for these commissions is under \$3 million. In a \$20 billion budget, it's such an infinitesimal amount of money.

The reason I bring this up is there's hard data saying that we need these commissions. Connecticut Voices for Children reports that right now average workers in Connecticut make \$19.95 per hour versus \$14.44 per hour for Black males versus \$12.19 per hour for Latino males. The average wage for a male in Connecticut is \$20.09 an hour. The average wage for a woman is \$16.49. That's hard data from the U.S. census. So unless we buy into the theory that folks of color and women are inferior, we know that the economic affects of discrimination have not been fully remedied yet. These commissions go far towards remedying economic injustice. So we urge you to restore them.

I know I'm not before the finance committee, but I just want to urge you folks – and we know that it is a tough task, to please raise the necessary taxes to allow for these commissions and other services vital to civilization to survive. Our state and federal government have given tremendous tax breaks over the years to the richest in our society. It's time that we look to the rich to bear a fair burden on their shoulders. They are much more capable than a lot of the folks who are going to suffer budget cuts otherwise. I would be happy to answer any questions.