



MetroHartford Alliance Statement

Connecticut General Assembly Labor and Public Employees Committee March 3, 2016

The MetroHartford Alliance serves as the region's economic development leader and the City of Hartford's Chamber of Commerce. Our investors include businesses of all sizes, health care providers, arts and higher education institutions as well as the municipalities of North Central Connecticut. Our mission is to ensure that the region competes aggressively and successfully for jobs, capital, and talent so that it thrives as one of the country's premier places for all people to live, play, work, and raise a family.

While Connecticut's ongoing economic recovery has shown modest growth, it has failed to yield an increase in tax revenues. The state now faces a budget shortfall of as much as \$266 million in the current fiscal year, a nearly \$900 million deficit in FY 2016-17, and projected deficits in excess of \$2 billion in both FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19. State budget deficits are unfortunately not new – what is new, however, is emerging bipartisan consensus that Connecticut's economic reality has fundamentally changed, and now our state government must change as well.

Connecticut's private sector employers generate the jobs and taxes that fund our state's government services and infrastructure investments; policies enacted by the legislature factor significantly in the decision making of these employers. Legislation that that will harm our state's employers' ability to compete and succeed should be rejected by anyone committed to creating jobs in Connecticut. For this reason, the MetroHartford Alliance urges the members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee to oppose:

- HB 5369 - An Act Concerning an Adjustment to the method for Determining the Maximum Weekly Unemployment Benefit Rate.
- HB 378 - An Act Concerning the Standard Rate of Wages.
- HB 5371 - An Act Concerning a Minimum Workweek for Persons Performing Building Maintenance Services.
- HB 5370 - An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage.
- SB 314 - An Act Concerning the Temporary the Temporary Family Assistance Program and Unemployment Compensation Benefits.
- SB 39 - An Act Concerning the Minimum Fair Wage and Employees Who Customarily and Regularly Receive Gratuities.

As Connecticut struggles with moderate economic growth and continued massive budget deficits, we cannot overstate the importance of sending a pro-growth message to businesses considering investing in or relocating to our state. Making Connecticut's employers less competitive by adding and expanding wage and benefit mandates is the last thing we should consider.

The MetroHartford Alliance also encourages the members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee to support:

- HB 5367 – An Act Concerning the Total Unemployment Benefit Rate and an Online Employment Exchange.
- SB 223 – An Act Concerning Employee Wages and Disciplinary Suspensions for Harassment or Workplace Violence.

HB 5367 makes important reforms to Connecticut's unemployment compensation benefits, bringing us more in line with neighboring states. SB 223 provides employers with increased flexibility in their operations by allowing biweekly payment to employees and by permitting employers to suspend without pay salaried workers (in the same manner currently applicable to hourly employees) who have violated a workplace rule on harassment or violence.

Patrick McGloin
Vice President for Government Relations and Public Policy
MetroHartford Alliance
pmcgloin@metrohartford.com
(860) 728-2263 (office)