



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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Testimony of Lori J. Pelletier, President
 Connecticut AFLCIO
 Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee
 February 16, 2016

Senator Gomes and Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor and Public Employees committee, on behalf of the over 200,000 union members and their families in our great state we present written testimony in favor of S.B. No. 39 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE MINIMUM FAIR WAGE AND EMPLOYEES WHO CUSTOMARILY AND REGULARLY RECEIVE GRATUITIES. (LAB)

Employees who work in the restaurant industry are the only employees whose wages are directly determined by their customers. It is also the industry where wage theft is the most prevalent. Just recently famed chef Mario Botelli was found guilty of \$3.2million in wage theft from his employees because he skimmed people's tips. We need to stop the dependency of wages being paid by the public and put the responsibility back where it belongs on the employer.

Workers in the hospitality industry are often exploited. The restaurant association hides behind the illusion of the fancy waiter at the chic hotel, when in reality workers particularly women and people of color are barely scraping by. Workers deserves fair wage not a wage dependent on customers and the honesty of their employers. The tip credit is a sexist and racist holdover and needs to be abolished.

As always thank you for holding this public hearing.

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