

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



JOE ARESIMOWICZ
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

February 16, 2017

Senator Gomes, Senator Miner, Representative Porter and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. I am Representative Joe Aresimowicz of the 30th District, serving Berlin and Southington. I am pleased to offer this testimony in support of **H.B. No. 5590 AN ACT CREATING A TASK FORCE TO IMPROVE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT** and **H.B. No. 5591 AN ACT CONCERNING PAY EQUITY IN THE WORKFORCE.**

I want to thank this committee for holding this public hearing and facilitating a conversation focused on encouraging economic growth and development in our state by investing and strengthening our workforce. Before this session, I talked with my own constituents and people across the state about the issues important to them. In every conversation, we discussed the importance of job growth and sustainability. I believe these two bills before you today will help us to address the concerns of our business owners and their employees.

H.B. No. 5590 AN ACT CREATING A TASK FORCE TO IMPROVE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Last year, I was proud to support a number of initiatives to educate youth about manufacturing jobs and develop programs to train the next generation of workers. We need to build on this progress and continue our work to develop programs like this in other industries including technology, insurance and bioscience. This bill will give us the tools we need to determine the number of trained workers we need in these various industries, track our progress in training those future workers and market these programs to our students.

I look forward to reviewing the testimony provided on this bill and engaging with all of the stakeholders in Connecticut's growing industries to expand and improve workforce development programs in our state.

H.B. No. 5591 AN ACT CONCERNING PAY EQUITY IN THE WORKFORCE

Equal pay for equal work is not exclusively a women's issue. Making our economy stronger goes hand in hand with ensuring that women get equal pay for equal work. Still to this day, women in Connecticut earn 83 cents for every dollar paid to men. This amounts to an annual wage gap of \$10,679. This bill addresses a family issue with more families increasingly relying on two incomes and more households are headed by women, families cannot afford this inequality and discrimination.

When women in Connecticut are earning 83 cents to every dollar paid to their male counterpart it affects all of us. On average, Connecticut women who are employed full time lose a combined total of more than \$5.5 billion every year due to the wage gap. These women, their families, businesses and the economy suffer as a result. Lost money means families have less money to save for the future or to spend on basic goods and services – spending that helps drive the economy.

I support these bills and the hardworking families that will benefit because of this legislation in creating a better and brighter economic future for our state.

Thank you for your consideration.