



## **Testimony on House Bill 5591**

Submitted by Suzanne Bates, Policy Director

February 16, 2017

Good afternoon. My name is Suzanne Bates. I am the policy director for the Yankee Institute for Public Policy, a Connecticut-based free market think tank.

I am here to testify in opposition to the House Bill 5591, An Act Concerning Pay Equity in the Workforce.

The state of Connecticut, in addition to preexisting federal law, already has several pay equity laws in statute. Section 31-75 of Connecticut General Statutes states that employers must generally provide equal pay for equal work that requires equal skill, effort, and responsibility, and is performed under similar working conditions. Moreover, Connecticut's human rights laws prohibit discriminatory employment practices.

In addition to state statutes, Connecticut employers must also comply with federal laws that require the same pay equity requirements.

The frequently quoted statistic that women make 77 cents for every dollar that a man earns was discredited years ago but is continually used to support legislation like House Bill 5591. That statistic, in reality, shows the differences in average earnings of all full-time working men and women, and does not account for important differences in position, education, occupation, hours, or tenure. When those factors are taken into consideration, the wage gap is in fact much smaller at around 5 cents rather than the aforementioned 23 cents. Even so, it is unclear whether the wage gap is the result of discrimination.

Passing House Bill 5591 is unnecessary, repetitive, and wasteful of lawmakers' time and resources, as several preexisting pay equity laws already protect the intended employees. It is true that women still face greater poverty than men in their later adult years, but there are better avenues to address this disparity than another pay equity law.

It is for these reasons that we urge the committee to oppose House Bill 5591.