



State of Connecticut
House Of Representatives

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Chairman Gomes, Chairwoman Porter, Chairman Miner, Vice Chairs, Ranking Member and Distinguished Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

I ask for your support for the following bills:

House Bill 5590 An Act Creating A Task Force To Improve The Workforce Development System In The State Of Connecticut
House Bill 5591 An Act Concerning Pay Equity in the Workforce
House Bill 6668 An Act Concerning Pregnant Women in the Workplace

HB 5590 – As a member of the Commission on Economic Competitiveness and representative in a town with two private universities, I have heard clearly the need to prepare our young people and workforce for the jobs available in a changing economy. Our growth sectors, including advanced manufacturing and the biosciences, require a trained workforce, prepared with the skills needed for 21st century jobs. This will require a nimble and responsive workforce development plan.

Our advanced manufacturing programs at places like Housatonic Community College have placement rates of over 95%, but the supply of trained workers is not keeping pace with the demand. As Connecticut seeks to become a national leader in the biosciences, a pipeline will be needed to satisfy the potential expansion in this field.

This bill provides an opportunity for all who educate and train our workforce to come together, identify challenges and solutions and improve our ability to match our workers with the jobs available now and in the future.

HB 5591 – Because women's salaries continue to lag behind men who are performing the same duties, this bill is a necessary step towards equality for women in the

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workplace. I wish this was not the case. Besides the obvious issue of justice, there is also the compounding effect of loss of wages over time.

Women, whose life expectancy exceeds their male co-workers, will be impacted not only in their earning years, but into retirement age as well. The median income of women 65 and older is 44% less than men in the same age group. Women 75 and older are almost twice as likely as men to be living under the poverty line. This occurs for many reasons, but unequal pay over the course of a career is certainly a factor.

Would we accept a different rate of pay for male and female legislators? Of course not. And the same should hold for any position where comparable work is being performed.

HB 6668 – Just as women should be given pay for equal work, they should not face discrimination when pregnant in the workplace. HB 6668 will strengthen the protections we provide to working mothers and assure their fair treatment under the law.

Please support HB 5590, 5591 and HB 6668. Thank you for your consideration.