

**Testimony of Tom Swan**

**Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee**

**February 16, 2017**

**In support of SB 1, SB 13, SB 747, HB6208, HB6212, HB 6219, HB 6901 and HB 6914**

Representative Porter, Senator Gomes, Senator Minor and other members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, my name is Tom Swan and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG). I am testifying today on behalf of our member families and want to thank you for raising a series of bills that will help working families.

The first bills I wish to comment on are SB 13 AAC THE MINIMUM WAGE AND HB 6208 AA INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE. CCAG strongly supports increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour as quickly as possible. We recognize that opponents of ending poverty will use many of the same old arguments that they have used every other time we have raised the minimum wage. The sky didn't fall then and will not fall now. Making work pay a living wage is not only the morally correct position, it is also good economically.

The second set of bills I wish to offer our support for are SB1 AAC A PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE SYSTEM IN THE STATE and HB 6212 AAC A PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE SYSTEM IN THE STATE. It is unconscionable to us that anyone could oppose creating a system to help families during times of need. As an employer who offers leave to our employees I understand how important it can be for our workers, their families and our organization in terms of building the type of team we need to be successful.

We also want to voice our support for SB 747 AA PROHIBITING 'ON-CALL' SHIFT SCHEDULING and HB 6914 AAC A MINIMUM WORK WEEK FOR PERSONS PERFORMING JANITORIAL OR BUILDING MAINTENANCE SERVICES. Addressing these scheduling issues is a pro-family position and is only fair.

Finally, I want to offer our strong support HB AAC THE RECOUPMENT OF STATE COSTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO LOW WAGE EMPLOYERS. It is unfair that these large profitable chain outfits are able to gain an unfair disadvantage on smaller competitors by externalizing the cost of their lousy wages to taxpayers. This concept allows the employers to either pay a decent wage or to reimburse the state for a portion of our costs due to their exploitive labor practices. At a time when people are saying that we need to cut state services and support for our municipalities we need to look for new ways to support each other. This proposal gets to the root of the problem and offers a solution for moving forward that will save the state money, bring in new revenue and improve the lives of many workers.