

**Labor and Public Employees Committee
February 21, 2017**

House Bill 5552: An Act Excluding Retirement Benefits from Collective Bargaining by State and Municipal Employees

House Bill 6457: An Act Limiting Wage Increases in Arbitration Awards

House Bill 6900: An Act Concerning Collective Bargaining Agreements

House Bill 6209: An Act Concerning Union Stewards and Compensation from the State

Senate Bill 596: An Act Concerning the Definition of Managerial Employee

House Bill 6662: An Act Concerning the Revocation of Pensions of Police Officers Who Commit Any Crime Related to Employment

House Bill 6663: An Act Concerning Police Misconduct

Senate Bill 746: An Act Amending the Municipal Employee Retirement System for Newly Hired Employees

House Bill 7086: An Act Concerning the Labor Department

Representative Porter, Senator Gomes, Senator Miner, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Stephen Anderson, and I am the President of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union which represents thousands of workers employed in the private and public sectors, as well as approximately 10,000 retirees currently living in the state of Connecticut. I submit this testimony on behalf of CSEA.

Today's public hearing covers multiple bills which attempt to weaken the rules and standards that protect working families in our state. These include legislative attacks on collective-bargaining, the creation of artificial limits on arbitration awards, rules prohibiting looking at balances when making financial decisions around collective bargaining agreements and others.

CSEA strongly opposes House Bill 5552: An Act Excluding Retirement Benefits from Collective Bargaining by State and Municipal Employees. This bill is based on the false premise that collective bargaining over benefits is a driver of our state's deficits. Our state budget is suffering because our economy and communities are suffering, but they are not suffering due to a lack of economic growth. They are suffering because far too much of that growth is going to the tiny percentage of superrich. Collective bargaining is the most effective force we have to spread the gains of economic growth to working families instead of the tiny few. Restricting collective bargaining and lowering standards for working families, private and public, will only make our economy more ineffective and unfair, and our state budget problems worse. Workers should have some say in what happens with their pension fund, and whittling away the pensions will only serve to strain an already overburdened workforce.

CSEA opposes House Bill 6457: An Act Limiting Wage Increases in Arbitration Awards.

This legislation is an attempt to tip the scales of justice away from working individuals by creating an artificial cap on what can be considered a fair arbitration resolution by limiting general wage increases in arbitration awards to 2%, lower than the 2016 average salary increase of 2.9%. Each arbitration must take into account multiple factors, including past wage increases, or lack thereof when making a decision. By creating an artificial cap on one aspect of arbitration awards, arbiters will be forced to alter their decisions in ways we cannot begin to predict in order to achieve a fair resolution. The general assembly should not attempt to micromanage arbitration awards.

CSEA opposes House Bill 6900: An Act Concerning Collective Bargaining Agreements. This bill attempts to blindfold decision makers by prohibiting the consideration of fund balances when determining whether a municipality can pay costs associated with collective bargaining agreements. This is bad public policy as decision makers should have all relevant information available to them in order to make informed judgments.

CSEA opposes House Bill 6209: An Act Concerning Union Stewards and Compensation from the State. The labor management relationship is one of mutual benefit for both management and workers, helping to improve working conditions while also making the state run more effectively. At present, Stewards receive union release time to conduct union business and this set up that has worked very well for several decades. HB 6209 attempts to unnecessarily complicate the labor management relationship in ways that would be detrimental to the mutually beneficial process.

CSEA opposes Senate Bill 596: An Act Concerning the Definition of Managerial Employee. The impetus for this legislation seems to be the successful organizing of both police captains and lieutenants and corrections officers, who while they supervise other police and corrections officers, have no authority for the implementation of policy or the ability to unilaterally hire or fire other employees. This is an attempt to exclude these workers from the collective bargaining process, thereby punishing their success and promotion into a higher position within state government.

CSEA opposes House Bill 6662: An Act Concerning the Revocation of Pensions of Police Officers Who Commit Any Crime Related to Employment and House Bill 6663: An Act Concerning Police Misconduct. Respectfully, we feel these bills are overly broad and have the potential for unintended consequences while subjecting law enforcement professionals to excessive penalties.

CSEA opposes Senate Bill 746: An Act Amending the Municipal Employee Retirement System for Newly Hired Employees. This bill attempts to weaken pension benefits for newly hired municipal employees by removing overtime from pension calculations, raising the retirement age, increasing required contributions and limiting cost of living increases. Weakening pensions and lowering standards is fundamentally moving Connecticut in the wrong direction. We should be looking to strengthen the benefits that give our workers stable retirements so fewer retirees are forced to leave due to our state's high cost of living.



Stephen Anderson
President

Roland Bishop
Secretary/Treasurer

David Glidden
Executive Director

And finally, regarding **House Bill 7086: An Act Concerning the Labor Department**, CSEA recommends that if the state is going to move forward with a study to determine whether policy and procedural changes within the department may increase the productivity of workers within the state, that frontline workers be included as part of the study as they see up close the reality that our state's workers face and will ultimately be the individuals tasked with implementing any changes recommended by this study.

Stephen Anderson
President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001