

# **Connecticut Communist Party USA**

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## **Labor and Public Employees Committee**

**Testimony, Thursday, March 8, 2018**

**Supporting SB 1, SB 15, HB 5043, HB 5044, HB 5386, 5387, 5388**

**Joelle Fishman, Connecticut Communist Party USA**

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

The bills before you today are of great importance to the future of our state. They provide a solution to give our state a significant economic boost, by addressing the shameful and unsustainable inequality in Connecticut,

Enacting pay equity, raising the minimum wage, and establishing paid family and medical leave will make it possible for thousands of women workers and their families to establish or increase their economic security and thereby contribute to the economic security of their communities and the entire state.

It is unacceptable that in 2018 due to the discriminatory wage gap women overall earn 83 cents for each dollar earned by white men, Black women earn only 59 cents and Latina women earn only 48 cents for each dollar earned by white men.

In preparing for this hearing, a friend who works in health care told me many of her co-workers, mostly single mothers, who are paid minimum wage are working as many as three jobs and still have to rely on assistance to pay the rent and put food on the table. Her co-workers want desperately to get off assistance, but their wages are no where near enough to live on.

In Connecticut, more than half of all mothers and 81% of Black mothers are key family bread winners. These mothers, their families and communities are deeply impacted by the pay gap, minimum wage, and responsibilities for family and medical care.

Instead of getting stuck into trickle down austerity measures that actually widen disparities, we urge the legislature to enact these structural changes to benefit all sectors of our economy.

We celebrate International Women's Day today because of the courageous women of the last century who walked off their sweatshop jobs demanding health and safety and wages and the right to vote. They awakened the solidarity of women around the world.

We will not go back to those deplorable conditions. The Connecticut State Legislature has the opportunity and obligation to pick up the mantle in this session and enact pay equity, increased minimum wage and paid family and medical leave. It is past due time to raise everyone up together.

### **References:**

"Paid Leave Means a Stronger Connecticut," National Partnership for Women and Families. January 2018

"Connecticut Women and the Wage Gap," National Partnership for Women and Families. April 2016

"The State Economy, The State Budget and the State of Our Children," CT Voices for Children January 2018

"Connecticut Low Wage Employer Advisory Board Report and Recommendation," December 2016