



Testimony of Mark Krauchik on SB 445
Joint Committees of Appropriations, Commerce, Finance and Planning & Development
March 23, 2018

Good afternoon Committee Chairs and Members. My name is Mark Krauchik. I am a resident of Woodbury and work as a custodian at Bungay Elementary School in Seymour. I am also the President of AFSCME Local 1303-025, representing Seymour Board of Education custodial and maintenance workers.

I am here to speak against SB 445, AN ACT CONCERNING AN ANALYSIS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON FISCAL STABILITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.

I would like to share some of my concerns about the Commission's findings.

I've worked as a school custodian for 15 years. I'm proud of what I do. My co-workers and I are dedicated to keeping Seymour's public schools clean, safe and functional. We are hard-working, taxpaying members of Connecticut's middle class.

I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth. I can't shake the feeling that Commission members are not on my side when they made recommendations that benefit the wealthy and the corporations.

For example, the Commission wants to eliminate the estate tax immediately, but delay an increase in the minimum wage until 2021. What kind of message does that send? That the ultra-rich matter more than workers struggling to feed themselves and their families?

The Commission wants to take \$1 billion out of the economy by cutting government spending. Haven't we had enough austerity budgeting already? What economist would say that's a good idea?

The Commission recommends outsourcing public services. Reckless outsourcing doesn't help taxpayers. It degrades public services and transfers money to private interests that don't reinvest in our communities.

The Commission recommends raising the sales tax. That's a regressive tax. It hits custodians and paraprofessionals and cafeteria workers more than it hits hedge fund managers, insurance executives and utility bigwigs.

The members of the Commission had a unique opportunity to address wage inequality and the wealth gap in Connecticut. They had a chance to address Connecticut's revenue shortfall by addressing the lack of fairness in our tax structure.

We can all agree that Connecticut has problems and challenges. Other than proposing to cut their own taxes, I'm not sure Commission fulfilled their duties.

If Connecticut is going to move forward; if Connecticut is going to be a better place for young people and the working class – then we need to have an honest discussion about asking the wealthy and big corporations to pay their fair share of taxes.

Connecticut's economy requires revenue for investment. With that money we can invest in schools, infrastructure, transportation, local cities and towns, and our healthcare system. The Commission's report is not a blueprint for investing the broader welfare of our society. It's a blueprint for us to be like Kansas, rather than California.

The Commission's report is not the yellow brick road they portray it to be; and if I may, Toto does not want to be in Kansas anymore.

Thank you for hearing me today.