

**To the Appropriations Committee, Commerce Committee, Finance,
Revenue and Bonding Committee, and Planning and Development
Committee**

Testimony of Daniel McInerney

**On Behalf of the CT Chapter National Electrical Contractors
Association**

and the

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

**Regarding the Report Issued by the Commission on Fiscal Stability
and Economic Growth**

March 23, 2018

Distinguished Committees, my name is Daniel McInerney and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the CT Chapter National Electrical Contractors Association and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers regarding the report issued by the Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth.

We would like to thank the Commission for taking the time and effort it took to put together this comprehensive study. We applaud the commission on certain recommendations, such as infrastructure improvements, which we are in desperate need of. We would caution the committee on other recommendations, such as amending prevailing wage laws to permit use of non-union labor on rehabilitation projects costing less than \$1million, replicating the change made for new construction in 2017.

I would like to address this recommendation. The report compares our poor economic growth to nearby states with much better growth, it is certainly not due in part to the prevailing wage law since Connecticut already has a significantly higher threshold rate for prevailing wage than the states we were compared to. The prevailing wage law also has nothing to do with the use of union or non-union labor. There are probably more non-union contractors and non-union labor earning decent middle-class wages and benefits working on prevailing wage projects than union contractors and union labor.

We feel that there was not enough input for the committee to make a recommendation like this, there was not any discussion on prevailing wage in the public commission meetings that can be recalled. How did the Commission arrive at this conclusion? Nation wide surveys show that states with weak or no prevailing wage laws led to construction workers earning less after those laws went into effect. Less money, poorer benefits if any, more safety violations as well as accidents. This is all a recipe for obstructing the growth of the middle class, who quite frankly is the driver of economic growth for any state. The erosion of the middle class over the last several decades only proves that point, if we are not spending our hard-earned dollars there is no growth.

A local news station, just yesterday, reported that the industry with the highest rate of uninsured workers was the construction industry. Who pays for them when they need medical attention, the taxpayer does. We would urge the Commission and the Committees here today to reconsider the recommendation to further weaken our prevailing wage laws.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Daniel McInerney

CT Chapter National Electrical Contractors Association

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers