

# Labor and Public Employees Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6935

AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHT OF A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE TO JOIN OR

**Title:** SUPPORT A UNION.

**Vote Date:** 3/21/2019

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/21/2019

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor and Public Employees Committee.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

There are no guidelines for the rights of public employees to join or remain members of a union.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Submitted.

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**Paul Fortier, Vice President, SEIU, 1199NE:** This ensures unions have the right to view messages before they are sent to employees or applicants, confirming they are accurate and reflect laws concerning union membership. It protects employees from intimidation regarding their right to join or support a union.

**Ron McLellan, President, CT Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511:** When asked if they would want to be in a union, a high percentage of workers say yes. Many don't have the opportunity to join because of intimidation by employers. There is a long history of company owners doing the unimaginable to keep workers from organizing to improve their lives. This bill attempts to level the playing field.

**Stuart Savaelkoul, Chief of Staff, AFT CT, AFL-CIO:** This bill takes a proactive step in limiting exposure to the negative consequences of Right-to-Work status for a significant

portion of the workforce. It protects the rights of public sector workers so they may continue belonging to labor unions.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Daniel C. Giungi, Senior Legislative Associate, CCM:** This proposal inhibits municipal employers from exercising their fundamental right and responsibility to communicate with employees. It places municipal employers in a precarious and unnecessarily adversarial position by mandating communications that could be misconstrued by employees as compelling them to decide to join or opt out of a union. It also places employees in an unfair position.

**Scott Shepard, Policy & Research Director, Yankee Institute for Public Policy:** This is a disturbing bill because it demonstrates a vision that places the needs and interests of government union leaders above those of government employees. The state should be transparent and not only permit, but require communication of worker's rights directly to employees. It is one-sided since the union, and only the union, gets to review and censor or piggyback on every communication from the state while the state has no oversight rights.

**Betsy Gara, Executive Director, COST:** This bill creates unnecessary tension between municipal employers and employees. CT law requires express employee consent for payroll deductions. Municipal employers must be able to communicate with employees and prospective employees to obtain consent regarding any deductions, including those for union dues. Employers have been very circumspect in responding to employees following the *Janus* decision, relying on the advice of counsel.

**Reported by: Marie Knudsen**

**Date: March 28, 2019**