



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Testimony in Support of

SB 2, AA Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage
HB 5004, AA Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage

Labor and Public Employees Committee
March 7, 2019

Member Organizations

The Umbrella Center for
Domestic Violence Services
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Family Justice
Bridgeport, CT

Women's Center
Danbury, CT

Domestic Violence Program
United Services
Dayville, CT

Network Against Domestic
Abuse
Enfield, CT

Domestic Abuse Services
Greenwich YWCA
Greenwich, CT

Interval House
Hartford, CT

Chrysalis Domestic Violence
Services
Meriden, CT

New Horizons
Middletown, CT

Prudence Crandall Center
New Britain, CT

The Umbrella Center for
Domestic Violence Services
New Haven, CT

Safe Futures
New London, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Norwalk, CT

Women's Support Services
Sharon, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Stamford, CT

Susan B. Anthony Project
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

Domestic Violence Program
United Services
Willimantic, CT

Good afternoon Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the committee. CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those who serve them. Our 18 member organizations provide essential services to nearly 40,000 victims of domestic violence each year. Services provided include 24-hour crisis response, emergency shelter, safety planning, counseling, support groups and court advocacy.

We urge your support of SB 2 and HB 5004, which will raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2022, begin annually indexing the minimum wage to the Consumer Price Index in 2023, and repeal the training wage for new and young workers.

Connecticut's living wage, the cost of maintaining a basic standard of living, is \$19.08 for a single adult and \$40.48 per hour for a single parent with two children. Connecticut's \$10.10 minimum wage is just 53% of the state's living wage for a single adult and does not come close to providing individuals and families enough to meet basic needs. A single adult making minimum wage would need to work 75.5 hours per week to make a living wage, and even then it would be just enough to make ends meet and include little else for emergencies.

For survivors of domestic violence, an increase in the minimum wage will positively impact their safety and that of their children. Financial abuse is a common tactic used by abusers to gain power and control in a relationship. Nationally it is estimated that financial abuse is present in 98% of abusive relationships. Abusers may prevent their victim from going to school and obtaining a degree or from working altogether, making the victim entirely dependent on them.

If a survivor chooses to leave, even after the relationship has ended, the impact of ruined credit scores, sporadic employment histories, limited education, and legal issues caused by the violence make it extremely difficult to pursue long-term economic security while staying safe. Many of these issues may also force the survivor into low-wage jobs. And for many survivors, concerns over their ability to provide financially for themselves and their children are significant reasons for remaining in or returning to an abusive relationship. When survivors have stable access to resources, such as a living wage, which help them build economic resiliency, they and their families are much more likely to remain safe and secure.

Increasing the minimum wage will better enable survivors to build assets to help them and their families meet both daily and long-term needs. A low minimum wage disproportionately affects women because women, and especially women of color, are more likely than men to hold low-wage jobs. The safety of domestic violence survivors and their children is directly linked to their ability to achieve economic security. Policies that increase the minimum wage will benefit many survivors of intimate partner violence, the majority of whom are women.

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Indexing for state-contracted nonprofits

An important piece to consider with this much needed increase in the minimum wage is that the state must also commit to indexing state contracts to meet the increase to \$15 and beyond should the minimum wage continue to be indexed annually according to the Consumer Price Index, as is proposed in these bills. The Governor included funding in his budget proposal for state-contracted nonprofit providers to accommodate the proposed increase in the minimum wage. CCADV supports a much-needed increase in the minimum wage that will certainly benefit survivors, but we also must be cognizant that our 18 member organizations provide critical services to survivors on behalf of the state through state contracts. If the state is going to pay its employees an indexed minimum wage each year and expect all private employers to do the same, then it should be annually adjusting its contracts accordingly.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions.

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