



INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

GARY JONES, President



BEVERLEY BRAKEMAN
DIRECTOR
REGION 9A UAW
111 SOUTH ROAD
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032-2560
PHONE: (860) 674-0143
FAX: (860) 674-1164
PRINTED IN U.S.A.

RAY CURRY, Secretary-Treasurer

March 7, 2019 Public Hearing
Labor and Public Employees Committee
Testimony Presented by Beverley Brakeman, Director, UAW Region 9A

- S.B. No. 2 An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage
H.B. No. 5004 An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage
H.B. 7191 An Act Increasing the Minimum Wage
S.B. No. 764 An Act Prohibiting "On-Call" Shift Scheduling
S.B. No. 989 An Act Concerning Basic Labor Standards for Transportation Network Company Drivers



Good afternoon Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Beverley Brakeman and I am the UAW Region 9A Director, which represents over 8,000 active and retired United Auto Workers members living and working in Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on several bills that would impact CT working families.

S.B. 2 and H.B. 5004 An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage: SUPPORT

We all understand that a \$10.10 minimum wage is not enough to support a single adult, let alone a family. Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 would allow full-time workers to earn up to \$3,000 in the first year of a phased-in increase. That's enough to make a huge difference in the life a fast-food worker, para-educator, healthcare worker and many other hardworking employees and would begin to reverse decades of growing inequality while, at the same time, boost economic activity and enhance revenue for the state.

With an increased minimum wage, more disposable income will be available to spend in the local economy, supporting businesses and paying more in sales tax. Businesses in states that have raised the minimum wage have seen reduced employee turnover, higher worker productivity rates and overall improved economic activity. These gains have more than offset the cost of wage increases.

Connecticut is surrounded by other states that all have minimum wages higher than ours. Implementing a \$15 minimum wage will keep us competitive in our region and help to attract and retain workers in the state. The positive impacts of reduced recidivism rates, improved worker mental health, reduced rates of child neglect and less reliance on safety net services will ultimately save taxpayer dollars for other investments in Connecticut.

I urge the committee to support these bills.

H.B. 7191 An Act Increasing the Minimum Wage: OPPOSE

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposal to increase the minimum wage has raised several concerns. His proposal more than doubles the impact of the subminimum wage training period for new hires and for workers under the age of 18. It increases the training period from 200 hours to 90 calendar days and reduces the subminimum wage rate from 85% to 75% resulting in a loss of close to \$1,900 during the training period than as provided in

current statute. The expanded subminimum training wage benefits fast food and retail chains with high-turnover staffing models and incentivizes more employers to fire workers as they "age out" of the training wage.

I ask you to amend H.B. 7191 to remove the expanded subminimum training wage.

**S.B. 764 An Act Prohibiting "On-Call" Shift Scheduling: SUPPORT**

"On-call" scheduling by employers contributes to many negative consequences that ultimately affects the economic stability of our state. On-call workers are unable to maintain consistent schedules which prevents them from providing proper child and elder care for their families and scheduling necessary doctor appointments. They are often unable to pursue educational opportunities or secure second jobs due to their unpredictable schedules and the stress involved in lost wages when their shifts are suddenly canceled is burdensome on them. Without their expected income, they are unable to pay bills in a timely manner.

Enacting S.B. 764 will help to support our working families by providing them with the security needed to be able to participate in and grow Connecticut's economy.

**S.B. 989 An Act Concerning Basic Labor Standards for Transportation Network Company Drivers: SUPPORT**

We have all used Uber and Lyft. It's convenient, cost-effective and easy to use. What you may not know is the exploitation experienced by Uber and Lyft drivers at the hands of companies that are extremely profitable. Based on research that has been done and payment mechanisms under which drivers must work, the average driver makes less than \$10 per hour. The drivers have no legal protections because they are classified as independent contractors and they don't fall under the state's minimum wage and hour laws.

This bill would provide our state's estimated 30,000 Uber and Lyft drivers with basic protections like getting a fair rate of pay for their work, prohibitions on transportation network companies from discriminating or retaliating against drivers discussing improved working conditions and requires transportation network companies to provide the legislature and people of Connecticut with insights into their industry which, to date, has refused to be transparent in their operations.

There are no good reasons not to pass this bill and provide basic protections for these drivers and we urge your support.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Beverley Brakeman

BB/jl  
opeiu494