



**TESTIMONY BEFORE LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE**

**SEAN GHIO  
POLICY DIRECTOR  
PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES  
MARCH 7, 2019**

Testimony Supporting

**S.B. No. 2 AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM FAIR WAGE  
H.B. No. 5004 AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM FAIR WAGE  
H.B. No. 7191 AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE**

Good afternoon Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, honorable ranking members and members of the committee. My name is Sean Ghio, and I am Policy Director at the Partnership for Strong Communities - a statewide nonprofit policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ending homelessness, expanding the creation of affordable housing, and building strong communities in Connecticut.

I respectfully request that the committee support these bills that will gradually increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. Many of Connecticut's low wage workers struggle with housing instability due to our state's high housing costs. More than 200,000 Connecticut households spend at least half their income on housing costs. An increase in the minimum wage will help to improve housing security for many families, but alone it will not eliminate the housing cost burdens of our lowest income families.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition annually produces the *Out of Reach* report. *Out of Reach* documents the gap between renters' wages and the cost of rental housing. The report's Housing Wage is the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a modest rental home without spending more than 30% of his or her income on housing costs. In Connecticut the housing wage for a modest 2-bedroom apartment is \$24.90.

Increases to Connecticut's rents have outpaced wage growth. Adjusting the minimum wage to \$15 per hour will provide many low wage workers with a measure of relief from rising housing costs.

I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to present this testimony.

