

# FOUNDATION FOR FAIR CONTRACTING OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

1268 Main St., Suite 202  
Newington, CT 06111



Labor and Public Employees Committee  
Public Hearing

March 7, 2019

**Re: SB 2 - *An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage***  
**HB 5004 - *An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage***

Chairwoman Kushner, Chairwoman Porter, Ranking Member Miner, Ranking Member Polleta and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

The Foundation for Fair Contracting of Connecticut (FFC) is a non-profit organization created by labor and management in order to monitor all public works construction projects covered under the Connecticut General Statutes Section 31-53 and the Davis-Bacon Act. We accomplish this by reviewing public documents prepared and/or submitted by the owner and contractor(s). We focus on licensing, proper payment of prevailing wage rates, proper classification of workers and properly administered state apprenticeship standards.

The FFC is submitting this testimony in strong **support** of both SB 2 and HB 5004, "*An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage*".

Both proposals seek to do the following:

- Raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour by 2022:
  - \$12.00/hour by January 1, 2020
  - \$13.50/hour by January 1, 2021
  - \$15.00/hour by January 1, 2022
- Begin indexing the minimum wage to the Consumer Price Index on January 1, 2023.

Raising the minimum wage is good for the construction industry and for Connecticut as a whole. The FFC monitors public works contracts for compliance with our state and federal wage laws. For the most part, the workers we interact with are paid well above the minimum wage. On public works projects, most workers are paid either the federal Davis-Bacon rate or our state's prevailing wage rate – at the least they should be. But there are employers who attempt to circumvent paying their workers the family-sustaining wage posted in the bid documents. And there are elected officials who continually beat the drum, insisting that construction workers' wages are simply too high.

The fact is that the prevailing wage sets a floor. The government weighed in and determined that, for the safety of workers and for the integrity of an entire industry, basic wage standards should be set and adhered to. Yet, these wage protections remain under attack and have continually been weakened due to greed and the corporate backed propagation of myths and bad information.

While Connecticut now excludes more public projects from prevailing wage protections than our neighboring states, we also have the lowest minimum wage in our region. New York State, New York City and Massachusetts have passed legislation to gradually move their minimum wage to \$15 per hour. Other New England States including Vermont, Maine and Rhode Island have a higher minimum wage than Connecticut, and yet are still considering additional increases.

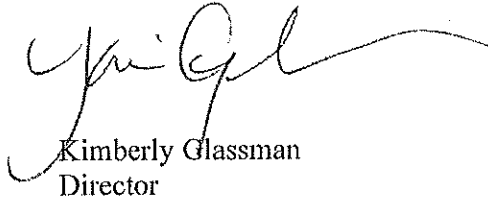
If we want to remain competitive in this New England region, and want to attract and retain skilled workers, including those in construction, then Connecticut must raise its minimum wage.

SB 2 and HB 5004 are bold and common-sense proposals that address our livability and economic progress. Both proposals suggest a gradual increase of our state's minimum wage to \$15/hr by 2022 with indexing to inflation.

The FFC believes that a rising tide lifts all boats. All industries, not just our service industries, stand to gain from these proposals. No longer should we scapegoat workers. No longer should our workforce bear the burden of subsidizing the lifestyles of the wealthiest among us. And no longer should we just accept that the greatest state in the union continue to suffer with the greatest wealth disparity.

We hope this committee supports SB 2 and HB 5004 and we urge a Joint Favorable vote.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kimberly Glassman  
Director