

**Richard Grimes**  
**Testimony for Public Hearing**  
**Labor and Public Employees Committee**  
**March 7th, 2019**

Welcome everyone! My name is Richard.

Thank you for coming out to support worker's rights at today's hearing.

In 2018, according to the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness over 3,380 people and 370 families were experiencing homelessness last year.

Homelessness is something no one should have to experience period- especially while working for a multi-billion-dollar corporation.

But it is a real issue that has been overlooked for too long.

Working families should not have to couch surf, live in a car, in a homeless shelter, or under a bridge.

I work 40 to 50 hours a week if I'm lucky and my shifts are not cut.

I should be able to pay rent and have a meal without thinking should I save this money for the gas bill?

And if companies keep paying as little as they can get away with, the economy will never get better.

Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour would put an additional \$1.2 billion a year into the paychecks of Connecticut's lowest paid workers.

This will make it easier for families to have roof over their head and it will flow directly back into our local stores and business – helping all of Connecticut to thrive.

Our economy is stronger when consumers have more money in their pockets and don't have to rely on help from the government.

And there is a growing list of major businesses who understand that concept, including Connecticut's own Aetna and Hartford Healthcare that have already moved to a minimum wage of at least \$15.

Connecticut is also falling behind a growing number of neighboring states, that have already passed a \$15 minimum wage.

This includes New York, Massachusetts, California, DC and New Jersey.

Good wages and fair labor standards have helped not hindered these locations.

Research has shown that recent minimum wage increases in major cities have successfully increased low-income worker pay without having an adverse effect on hiring and hours.

If they can make it happen, why can't Connecticut?

It's time that our demands for \$15 dollars an hour and union rights are heard.

Thank you.