



Labor and Public Employees Committee  
March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Testimony in Support of SB 64, An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage

Testimony in Support of HB 5004, An Act Increasing the Minimum Wage

Testimony in Support of SB 764, An Act Prohibiting "On-Call" Shift Scheduling

Good afternoon Chairwoman Kushner and Chairwoman Porter. My name is Zak Leavy and I am a legislative advocate for AFSCME Council 4 which represents over 30,000 public and private employees across Connecticut.

We support **SB 64 and HB 5004** which would raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour over several years. It also indexes it to the consumer price index in 2023 which would help employees keep pace with rising costs.

This is an important bill that would help increase wages for thousands of workers in Connecticut and increase spending power in their local communities. As income inequality grows, and with a federal government that is robbing the workers and giving to billionaires, we need this bill to help working families support themselves and their families. According to recent surveys, over 60% of respondents did not have \$1000 in savings to cover a major unexpected expense. This is unsustainable and puts people at constant risk of needing to balance their life and needs with work to cover basic living expenses.

These bills also eliminate the training wage to bring equity to wages in the workforce. A training wage incentivizes employers to engage in bad practices that have higher turnover. It also employers to fire a worker once he becomes older than the training wage. This practice is unfair to workers of any age and we thank the committee for eliminating the training wage in these bills.

We also want to thank the Governor for his proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. However, we disagree with indexing the minimum wage to the Economic Cost Index which only takes into consideration employer costs rather than what employees can afford to purchase. In addition, no other states index the minimum wage to the ECI. We also urge the committee to amend the Governor's proposal to remove the expansion of the training wage. This expansion would cost full-time workers over \$1000 over the 90 days as well as incentivize employers to hire people purely based on their age.

We urge the committee to support SB 2 and HB 5004.

We also support **SB 764** which would prohibit the practice on “on-call” scheduling. This would stop the issue of employers exploiting their workers by being able to control their lives by always having the ability to make them work or be available with little notice. Workers deserve the ability to know what their work schedule will be and not have to worry about if they are going to be forced to work or not that day.

This bill would allow workers to have a 72 hour notice for scheduling changes which would allow workers the ability to plan their life around work and make needed adjustments. It would also allow workers to be compensated if the shift they showed up to work is cancelled. Hopefully, this would prevent employers from creating uncertainty in employees’ lives.

We urge the committee to support **SB 764, *An Act Prohibiting “On-Call” Shift Scheduling.***