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Jessica Lora
Member of 32BJ SEIU, Cleaner at 51 Farmington Road, Hartford

Labor & Public Employees Committee
March 7, 2019

SB 2 An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage
HB 5004 An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage

- Good afternoon members of the committee, and thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is Jessica Lora. I'm here to speak in support of raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by passing SB 2 and HB 5004.
- I work part-time in the evenings as a cleaner in an office building in Hartford, where I make \$15.50 an hour, and also in the mornings at a portrait studio, where I makes \$10.10, the current minimum.
- I love the portrait studio job and have learned many things over the years I've worked there. But I know the difference in my paychecks, and I know that it's only because I have a union that I am able to earn about 50% more as a cleaner.
- If the minimum wage went up, my bosses at the photo studio might grumble. But they would raise the wage, especially since it would be a raise absorbed by the business over time.
- Our neighbors in Massachusetts and New York have raised the wage. Cities like Seattle have not experienced any major downturn in business when they raised the wage.
- I am proud of what my union has fought for. Now my union, 32BJ, is joining with unions across the state to raise the wage for all workers, because it's better for everyone if the floor goes up.
- The average person who makes a minimum wage is a person like me, about 35 years old, who works full-time. Almost a third are mothers, like me. And our numbers are not small – almost one in five workers in Connecticut, almost 20%, would benefit from a raise.

- I am lucky because my weekly earnings are not just the minimum. And my husband also has a good job where he makes more than the minimum.
- But I can see how hard it would be to just make it on \$10.10 an hour. And I know that most of those in that position are not teenagers but working women and men, who need to juggle one bill and another, trying not to sink.
- I hope the committee can help me and the hundreds of thousands of Connecticut workers who need to depend on a decent minimum wage to survive, and pass S.B. 2 and H.B. 5004.
Thank you.