

**LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE**  
Thursday, March 7, 2019

**CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP**

**TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF**

**S.B. 2: An Act Increasing a Fair Minimum Wage**

**H.B. 5004: An Act Increasing a Fair Minimum Wage**

Senator Kushner and Representative Porter and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Ann Pratt, Director of Organizing for CT Citizen Action Group- a statewide organization committed to putting people first. I want to thank this committee for advancing these two crucial pieces of legislation- and for your commitment and leadership in ensuring a fair and equitable wage for all of Connecticut's working families.

On behalf of the thousands of members we represent in this state, we offer our strong support for SB 2 and HB 5004- An Act Increasing a Fair Minimum Wage. The implementation of this legislation—which raises the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2022- will positively benefit the lives of over 510,000 low wage workers in Connecticut- while at the same time take an important step towards slowing the rampant- and immoral – growth of income disparities in our state.

We applaud this legislation for its impact on families, children and our communities. According to a report by the Economic Policy Institute, this increase will benefit woman over 30 who work full time and provide more than half of the family income. This demographic constitutes 25% of Connecticut's parents. 45% of these workers also have some college education and/or degrees. This legislation will take an important step to help mitigate some of the economic disparities in our state- but we should take this as only the very first step.

In a recent United Way report, it is estimated that the cost of annual household expenses for a family of four in Connecticut is \$77,832. If a worker in Connecticut received \$15 per hour, works 40 hours per week and works 50 weeks- they earn a mere \$30,000. Even if there were two income earners in this household at this wage level- and they have two children- the math is clear, this hourly wage is woefully inadequate.

It is obscene that these realities exist for working families who live in one of the wealthiest states in the country. According to the Economic Policy Institute, CT has the third highest level of income inequality in the country. The top 1% of income earners in Connecticut earn 37.2 times 99% of the population. In Fairfield County, the **average** income of the top 1% is close to **\$6.3 million-** compared with \$100,000 annual average income of the bottom 99%. It is nonsensical to imagine that Connecticut would lack the moral and political courage to implement a \$15 an hour minimum wage. – and to view this raise as just the floor that we plan to build upon towards creating a state that truly has an economy with a shared prosperity for all.

We urge this Committee to do what is right, what is moral and what is just- make sure that S.B. 2 and H.B. 5004 becomes law, so that our state gets closer to an economy that has a shared prosperity for all- not just the few.

Thank you,  
Ann Pratt, CCAG