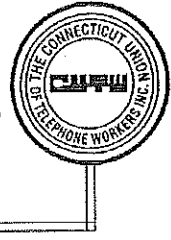




**Communications  
Workers of America**

**The Connecticut Union  
of  
Telephone Workers, Inc.**



**Local 1298**  
AFL-CIO

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**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  
HB 7191 An Act Increasing the Minimum Wage**

Good afternoon Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is David Weidlich Jr and I am President of the Communications Workers of America Local 1298 representing over 2000 members in Connecticut I am here today to testify in favor of SB 2 An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage and HB 5004 An Act Raising the Minimum Fair Wage.

***Working families cannot afford to live on \$10.10 per hour***

- *Connecticut's living wage, the cost of maintaining a basic standard of living, is \$19.08 for a single adult. It's \$40.48/hour for a single parent with two children.*
- *A single adult would need to work 75.5 hours per week in order to make a living wage warning \$10.10/hour.*
- *Full-time workers could earn up to \$3,000 in the first year of a phased-in increase. That's enough to make a tremendous difference in the life a fast-food worker, para-educator, janitor, healthcare worker, retail clerk and many other hardworking employees. It would begin to reverse decades of growing inequality and simultaneously create new levels of consumer demand.*

***Raising the minimum wage is important to help close racial pay gaps***

- *The minimum wage disproportionately impacts workers of color, who are overrepresented in low-wage jobs that do not fair wages.*
- *While African American and Hispanic workers make up 26% of the state workforce, almost one-third (33.1%) of them would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage. More than 37% of African American and Hispanic women would directly benefit.*

***Raising wages benefits our society***

- *Raising the minimum wage can also have positive impacts on reducing recidivism rates, improving worker mental health and reducing rates of child neglect.*
- *Worker who earn more are less reliant on safety net services (childcare subsidies, energy assistance, SNAP, Husky, housing assistance, etc.), saving taxpayer dollars for other investments.*

Lastly, I have concerns about HB 7191, the Governor's proposal to raise the minimum wage. It more than doubles the impact of the subminimum wage training period for new hires and for workers under the age of 18. It increases the training period from 200 hours to 90 calendar days and reduces the subminimum wage rate from 85% of the full minimum wage to 75%. Under this bill, full-time workers could lose almost more than \$1,900 during the training period than as provided in current statute. Someone earning minimum wage simply cannot afford that loss.

We don't have different health and safety standards for new or younger workers. Workers' compensation statutes don't have different standards for new or younger workers. The law doesn't allow employers to discriminate against new or younger workers. We shouldn't allow employers to pay new or younger workers a lower minimum wage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I ask you to support SB 2 and HB 5004. I ask you to amend HB 7191 to remove the expanded subminimum training wage.

Respectfully submitted,

David Weidlich Jr, President CWA Local 1298