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March 7, 2019
Ivy Wilson, Direct Care Support
Before the Labor & Public
Employees Committee

In support of SB 2 and HB 5004: AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM FAIR WAGE.

Good Evening Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Hello, my name is Ivy Wilson, a registered voter from Windsor. I am here because workers like me in Connecticut are paid poverty wages for their hard work, and so I am calling upon your committee to support a \$15 minimum wage for all.

I have worked four years as direct care support at Journey Found, a group home agency for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities. I work third shift, where I take care of our individuals' needs through the night and morning, including getting them ready for the day and helping them with their hygiene. But more than that, I play a critical role in their lives. They feel comfortable coming to me with their issues, and they see me as their advocate and a source of support. It makes my day to see their smiles when I walk in the room. This is the job that I am passionate about, and I take pride in what I do.

However, it takes everything I have to stay in an industry where I am vastly underpaid. As a single mother with a son in college, I struggle to pay my bills no matter how hard I work. Just to make ends meet, I work 40 hours a week at Journey Found and 40 hours at my other job, for a total of 80 hours. This means that every time my son comes home from school, instead of spending time with him, I am out at work taking on an extra shift. Now, I do want to recognize that last May the State approved the first new increase in funding for group home agencies in years, and as of January 1st my pay rose from \$12.75 to \$14.75. This has been a big help, but I am still struggling just to break even. With a raise in the minimum wage and more

funding for group home workers, I could reduce my hours and spend that time with my family and taking care of myself.

I should not have to choose between the job I love and making enough money to provide for my family. I deserve at least \$15 for the services I provide, just as every working family in Connecticut deserves \$15 so we can live a decent life.