



Sarah Ganong, Connecticut Working Families & Recovery for All

HB 6187 An Act Concerning the Restructuring of Certain Taxes and Equity
SB 821 An Act Concerning the Reformation of Certain Taxes and Tax Equity

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Scanlon, and the distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. My name is Sarah Ganong, I live in Hartford, and I'm the Campaigns Director of Connecticut Working Families. Working Families is a grassroots political organization that fights for an economy that works for everyone and a democracy where every voice matters. We are also part of the growing Recovery for All coalition. Thanks for holding this public hearing today.

My testimony is in strong support of H.B. 6187 and S.B. 821.

The scale of our current crisis requires a bold response. Across Connecticut, working people are suffering and the state has a responsibility to meet our needs. Business as usual won't suffice -- this is an emergency, and we need to act like it. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated existing economic and racial disparities. But with a Recovery for All, we have a chance to begin addressing those wrongs.

As a Hartford resident, I've seen my community get hit especially hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Countless neighbors have stepped up, by donating to mutual aid funds, running errands for each other, covering childcare, and more. We've pulled through by pulling together, and my community has left no one behind. Now, it's time for our government to step up for us too, by increasing taxes on the wealthiest among us to fund the goods and services all our communities deserve. We need to make sure our state tax policy invests in the future, and doesn't just fill holes or respond to emergencies.

Right now, Connecticut residents are hurting, with unemployment hovering around 8%, over 15,000 families facing eviction, and nearly 20% of adults with children saying their kids don't have enough to eat. When individuals are facing such drastic need, it's not just them and their families that suffer -- the very fabric of our neighborhoods and communities are drastically altered when a family is evicted from their home, or when someone has to move to make sure they can keep a job to put food on the table. We need investment in our families and in the places where they live, so everyone can thrive.

But the budget put forward a month ago from Governor Lamont fails to meet the moment, and that's why the Recovery for All coalition is before the Finance Committee today. In the midst of the greatest crisis in 100 years, Governor Lamont proposed an austerity budget that will guarantee a stagnant economy, drawn-out recession, and worsening inequality. With proposals to raise the gas tax and taxes on retired teachers, the Governor balances the budgets on the backs of working people to

benefit the ultra-wealthy. Instead, as HB 6187 and SB 821 propose, now is the time to go big. That is the only path out of this emergency, and towards a robust economic Recovery for All, not just the few.

We need a tax code that allows us to make significant investments in equitable preK-12 public education, robust public colleges and universities, access to affordable healthcare and realizing affordable housing goals. These investments will create equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of race, gender, income or zip code and ensure Connecticut's recovery is shared by all.

These bills will invest in neighborhoods and communities like mine, and the people who live here, by providing a one-time direct stimulus payment of \$500, providing relief to property owners by doubling the property tax credit to \$400, creating a child tax credit for working- and middle-class families with kids, and lower taxes on working families through expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to stop the hurt so many families are feeling by funding essential services, reducing economic and racial inequality, and setting our state on a path to robust economic recovery by restoring fairness to our tax code, I urge the Committee to have the courage to make the right choice and pass HB 6187 and SB 821. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sarah Ganong,

On behalf of Connecticut Working Families and the Recovery for All coalition