

Testimony in Support of SB 821 and HB 6187
From: State Representative Christine Palm (D-36)

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To Co-Chairs Sen. John Fonfara and Rep. Sean Scanlon
Ranking Members Sen. Martin and Rep. Cheeseman
Vice Chairs Sen. Moore, Rep. Kavros DeGraw and Rep. Meskers

I write in support of both SB 821 and HB 6187 because, quite simply, investing in our people must take precedence over everything. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we are interconnected – race, social status, income level, religion, party affiliation, age and gender all melt away in the face of catastrophe.

As a fellow legislator, I believe it is my duty, and yours, to insist on the best that government can be: both a protector in hard times and a critical underpinning for the personal, familial and financial success of all people.

Like you, I hear frequently from people who complain about Connecticut's taxes. But I also hear from just as many constituents who care for those outside the confines of my district, or the safety of their own circumstances. These are taxpayers who understand that the chronic impoverishment of the most financially insecure, as well as the precariousness of the middle class, have the power to topple the security of those at the top. Why? Because without meaningful tax reform, we will always be paying for the poverty of others' pocketbooks, (if not our own poverty of the soul).

Tax reform that asks the extremely wealthy to pay their fair share is only reasonable. Burdening working families with a higher aggregate tax rate is not. Tax reform that asks more of specific types of corporations is sensible; expecting working people to underwrite the success of those corporations is not. Economic recovery – especially in so small a state as Connecticut – must include everyone.

I grew up on Prospect Avenue in West Hartford. My family's house was five down from the Governor's mansion. But it was also a quick walk to Homestead Avenue in Hartford's North End. Connecticut is full of places like this – a stone's throw from extreme wealth and extreme poverty. While the income divide widens, the proximity stays the same.

Without equitable taxation, we are kidding ourselves: the extremely wealthy may be able to look the other way temporarily – to drive down a different street to avoid having to see the struggles of the working class – but they cannot escape this fact: the poverty of others will take its toll, ultimately, on everything the wealthy mistakenly believe to be inviolable.

Please advance this sensible legislation which will make the state we all love stronger for us all.