



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE GARY TURCO
27TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 1801
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8585
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-8267
FAX: (860) 240-0206
E-MAIL: Gary.Turco@cga.ct.gov

VICE CHAIR
HIGHER EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT
COMMITTEE

MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Testifying in support of
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

Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee
March 15, 2021

Co-Chairs Scanlon and Fonfara, Ranking Members Martin and Cheeseman, and the distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, I am State Representative Gary Turco and I'm proud to represent my constituents in the 27th House District in Newington. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 6187 and SB 821, bills that if enacted, will make a true and positive impact on the constituents we represent who are in need during these difficult times.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we constantly heard people say, "We are in this together." As we forged through grim moments of death and the unknown, it was comforting to get behind the maxim that enduring a pandemic did not happen alone, but together. We may have entered the pandemic in solidarity, but the devastating impact from it is not a burden shared equally. Unemployment surged in records not seen since the Great Depression. Racial and ethnic minority groups especially have been at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19. They and working women disproportionately experienced job losses. However, billionaires increased their wealth by more than a quarter. [1]

The unsettling reality of our dual pandemics – of COVID-19 and racial injustice – did not disappear as we turned our calendars to 2021. The negative health and economic effects of COVID-19 disproportionately affect our black and brown neighbors, friends, and family. Beyond immediate federal aid and unemployment, a more equitable future depends on a comprehensive approach for access to education and job training opportunities to enter Connecticut's high-wage and high-growth industries.

To rebuild a fair economy, and knit our state back together, we can't continue to ignore our regressive tax system. Working- and middle-class families pay a larger percentage of their

incomes in taxes than the wealthiest in our state. If you make less than \$53,000 a year, you pay an effective tax rate that is more than triple that of the wealthiest who make over \$680,000 a year. [2] To do right for middle- and lower-income families, we need to make some changes such as expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and diversify where our state revenues come from to make it fairer to working and middle-class families and seniors.

The proposals contained in HB 6187 and SB 821 are not “broad-based” tax increases. They are narrowly focused proposals to fund essential services, which have been stretched beyond the limit and jumpstart economic recovery. We can also position ourselves to provide enhanced municipal aid to our cities and towns. Without it, residents who are lucky enough to own their own homes will see their property taxes increase.

As the African proverb says, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” To truly be “in this together”, we need to go far. We can do so by standing with those who have risked their lives on the frontlines. They have suffered enough. It’s time for everyone else to invest in Connecticut and its recovery. HB 6187 and SB 821 help us do just that.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Turco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Turco
State Representative
Proudly Serving Newington’s 27th District

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/oct/07/covid-19-crisis-boosts-the-fortunes-of-worlds-billionaires>

[2] <https://ctvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Advancing-Economic-Justice-Through-Tax-Reform-Just-Research.pdf>