

Testimony of Susan Eastwood

In SUPPORT of

**H.B. No. 5158, AN ACT CONCERNING BREASTFEEDING IN THE
WORKPLACE.**

**H.B. No. 6380, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISCLOSURE OF SALARY
RANGE FOR A VACANT POSITION.**

Labor and Public Employees Committee

February 9, 2020

Dear Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Susan Eastwood and I live in Ashford, Connecticut. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the above referenced bills.

H.B. 5158, AAC Breastfeeding in the Workplace would modernize the current law, which requires employers to make reasonable efforts to provide a private room to breastfeed, or to pump their milk. This bill would improve the current law by requiring this private space to have an electrical outlet, which makes sense because the majority of breast pumps are electric, and would require that there be a refrigerator for the employee to storing their breastmilk.

Although my own children are now grown, I will never forget my own experience as a young mother working as a family violence victim advocate in Hartford Superior Court. A kind DA, also a recent mother, allowed me to pump my breastmilk in her office during lunch hour, while all the attorneys were out for lunch. I would then carry the container to a refrigerator in the prosecutor's office! Lacking a private space for this purpose, I relied on the kindness of strangers! I was lucky, but many are not.

We all know that there are many health benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and child. We must act to support women who breastfeed by removing barriers that continue to make it difficult to express and store breastmilk safely and privately at work.

H.B. 6380, AAC the Disclosure of Salary Range for a Vacant Position is an important step in achieving pay equity. Knowing the salary range of a position is important for everyone, but especially for women.

Women in Connecticut continue to earn significantly less than their male colleagues across nearly all occupations and industries. Women in Connecticut earn on average \$0.84 cents for every dollar paid to men, even less for women of color. The wage gap begins with a woman's first job after college and adds up over time. These inequities in pay have consequences for Connecticut families, and as a whole they have national impacts. Women's earnings are critical to economic growth: if women received equal pay, the United States economy would produce additional income of \$512.6 billion.

I appreciate the steps our Connecticut legislature has already taken to close the wage gap. HB 6380 will continue those efforts and make salary negotiations more transparent. Studies show that women often ask for less than men when they negotiate even when they are otherwise equally qualified. Yet, research shows that when job applicants are clearly informed about the context for negotiations women are more willing to negotiate and are more successful in negotiating, which reduces the gender wage gap.

HB 6380 also changes the existing "equal pay for equal work" standard to require "equal pay for comparable work". "Comparable work" addresses inequity in pay that results from a long history of sex-segregated occupations and different pay scales for jobs considered traditionally male vs. those considered traditionally female. This language mirrors legislation passed in 10 states, most recently in Massachusetts.

HB 6386 is a necessary step forward to ensure Connecticut continues as a leader in gender equity and pay transparency, for the sake of Connecticut's women and families.

I urge you to pass these important bills out of the Labor Committee, and work to ensure their passage this session.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan Eastwood

Board Member, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in Connecticut, Inc.

Ashford, CT