



BEVERLEY BRAKEMAN
DIRECTOR
REGION 9A UAW
111 SOUTH ROAD
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032-2560
PHONE: (860) 674-0143
FAX: (860) 674-1164

INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA – UAW

Testimony of Beverley Brakeman
Regional Director
United Auto Workers Region 9A

Labor and Public Employees Committee Public Hearing
Thursday, February 18, 2021

In support of:

SB 658: AN ACT REQUIRING EMPLOYERS TO RECALL LAID-OFF WORKERS IN ORDER OF SENIORITY

SB 668: AN ACT CONCERNING A FAIR WORK WEEK SCHEDULE

HB 6343: AN ACT ENSURING FAIR EMPLOYEE PROTECTIONS FOR GIG WORKERS

Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, and members of the committee,

My name is Beverley Brakeman and I live in West Hartford, Connecticut. I am the Regional Director of United Auto Workers Region 9A. I am testifying today in favor of SB 658: An Act Requiring Employers To Recall Laid-Off Workers in Order of Seniority, SB 668: An Act Concerning a Fair Work Week Schedule and HB 6343 -- An Act Ensuring Fair Employee Protections For Gig Workers.

The common theme among these three bills is that they all endeavor to restore balance in the employer/employee relationship. COVID-19 has caused a jobs crisis with tens of thousands of Connecticut workers becoming unemployed through no fault of their own. An unprecedented number of workers, disproportionately women and workers of color, have lost their incomes and access to healthcare. Requiring companies to rehire former employees mitigates the effects of the current catastrophic situation, again which has disproportionately impacted women and workers of color.

SB 658 requires that once businesses reopen and jobs become available, companies must offer workers job positions before hiring new workers. A worker must be qualified for the position and qualified workers would be rehired by order of tenure.

As for SB 668, there is nothing more fundamental to a worker than to know what hours that must be worked so that she can plan her life accordingly. Sadly, many hourly workers in Connecticut's service industries are saddled with unpredictable, fluctuating workweeks over which they have no control. Most of the routine practices employed by owners of these businesses have caused profound economic

insecurity for the workers, particularly for women and workers of color. This bill seeks to bring back balance to Connecticut service workers' lives.

These low wage hourly workers, many of whom earn poverty wages, struggle to earn a stable income, in large part due to an inability to secure a predictable work schedule from their employer. Many times, these employees are forced to work with little notice, maintain open availability for "on-call" shifts without any guarantee of work thereby making planning anything outside of work impossible, and have shifts cancelled at the last minute, again without any compensation. This instability to their lives translates into economic and caregiving instabilities for the entire family.

Finally, HB 6343 ensures fair protections for gig workers. Under current employee classifications, certain types of gig work, such as driving for internet-based food delivery or ridesharing services, may be classified as independent contracting because the work occurs outside of employers' physical locations. These workers are not legally entitled to fair pay, family and medical leave, paid sick leave, unemployment benefits or workplace protections because they are misclassified as independent contractors. By removing work outside of the office from the "B" portion of the ABC test for independent contractors, it eliminates classification based solely on work location.

These three bills go a long way to help workers get back on their feet and create some fairness in the workplace. Please support SB 658, 668 and HB 6343. Thank you.