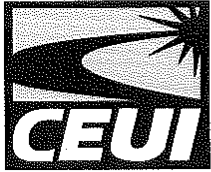


SEIU Local 511



# CONNECTICUT EMPLOYEES UNION INDEPENDENT

PO Box 1268  
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February 9, 2021

Labor and Public Employees Committee Public Hearing  
Testimony by Carl Chisem, President  
Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511

**In Support of H.B. 6377 AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR PEACE AGREEMENTS AND A MODERN AND EQUITABLE CANNABIS WORKFORCE**

**In Support of H.B. 6378 AN ACT CODIFYING PREVAILING WAGE CONTRACT RATES**

**In Support of H.B. 6380 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISCLOSURE OF SALARY RANGE FOR A VACANT POSITION**

**In Support of H.B. 6381 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE REGARDING THE STATE WORKFORCE AND RETIRING EMPLOYEES**

**In Support of H.B. 6383 AN ACT CONCERNING CALL CENTERS AND NOTICE OF CLOSURES**

**In Support of S.B. 836 AN ACT CONCERNING PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY AND PENSION OFFSETS**

Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, and distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, my name is Carl Chisem and I am President of the Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511. We represent over 3,600 blue collar maintenance and service State workers. Our members provide valuable services within our state facilities. They cook, clean, repair, maintain and deliver in Connecticut's State buildings, hospitals, college campuses, airports, roads, bridges, and parks. I write in support of H.B. 6377, H.B. 6378, H.B. 6380, H.B. 6381, H.B. 6383 and S.B. 836.

**H.B. 6377 AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR PEACE AGREEMENTS AND A MODERN AND EQUITABLE CANNABIS WORKFORCE.** CEUI, Local 511 stands in solidarity with UFCW in supporting the legalization of recreational cannabis in Connecticut with the addition of labor peace agreements as a condition of cannabis licensure and renewal. Labor peace agreements protect businesses, workers, and consumers, and are an effective regulatory tool for the state. They ensure quality job creation by ensuring these will be well paid, safe, and family-sustaining jobs. Labor peace agreements can also help address diversity by providing equal opportunities for women, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, veterans, and people with disabilities to own businesses or work within the industry. Including labor peace agreements as we expand the cannabis industry, will reward responsible businesses, and ensure that Connecticut's cannabis industry is driven by companies committed to making long-term investments in local communities. I urge the committee to support this legislation.

**H.B. 6378 AN ACT CODIFYING PREVAILING WAGE CONTRACT RATES.** Prevailing wage laws ensure that hourly wages paid to construction workers are maintained to prevent low bid construction projects from destabilizing the local economy and to advance workforce development. Connecticut's prevailing wage rates are determined through the collective bargaining process. H.B. 6378 seeks to codify this practice by guaranteeing that the collective bargaining rate is the market rate. CEUI, SEIU Local 511 stands with our brothers and sisters in the building trades in support of this legislation to protect our state's prevailing wage law.

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**H.B. 6380 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISCLOSURE OF SALARY RANGE FOR A VACANT POSITION.** The issue of pay equity in Connecticut continues to be a problem. Women in Connecticut earn, on average, \$0.84 cents for every dollar paid to men. Even worse, the gender wage gap is more severe for women of color. Asian women earn \$0.83, Black women earn \$0.57, Native women earn \$0.55 and Latina women earn \$0.48 for every dollar paid to men. With more households than ever being headed by women and more women of color working in frontline jobs, we must act now to eradicate this wage gap and require transparency in the disclosure of salary ranges.

H.B. 6380 would strengthen existing law and increase transparency in pay by leveling the playing field for job applicants with regards to compensation and benefits. By requiring equal pay for comparable work, the ongoing problem of wage disparities will narrow ensuring that women in Connecticut are paid what they deserve. I urge the committee to support this bill.

**H.B. 6381 AN ACT ESTABLISHG A TASK FORCE REGARDING THE STATE WORKFORCE AND RETIRING EMPLOYEES.** As the President of CEUI, SEIU Local 511, representing over 3,600 state employees, I strongly support H.B. 6381 which establishes a task force to look at the 2022 retirement cliff and the continued barriers to recruitment into the managerial and exempt workforce. The anticipated number of retirements by 2022 requires a succession plan that deals with eliminating the barriers to recruitment such as salary compression and inversion between management and union employees, that restructures the Managerial Pay plan, that provides parity in health care contributions and offers opportunities for professional development and continuing education.

Guaranteeing that our state government can provide the many vital services needed by so many with the anticipated departure of many in the managerial work class in 2022, we must ensure these vacant positions are filled by highly qualified individuals. Eliminating the recruiting barriers will provide greater odds to ensuring the smooth transition to a new workforce.

**H.B. 6383 AN ACT CONCERNING CALL CENTERS AND NOTICE OF CLOSURES.** There are over 31,000 call center workers in Connecticut. CWA Local 1298 represents approximately 600 of these workers. This bill would prevent the outsourcing of Connecticut call center jobs to other states by requiring call center employers with more than 50 employees that move 30% or more of their operations out of the state to no longer qualify for tax breaks or other state incentives. Businesses would be required to notify the state 100 days prior to relocation or face a fine, and state agencies would be required to use state call centers for their customer service. This bill creates transparency where there currently is none. I urge the committee to support this bill.

**S.B. 836 AN ACT CONCERNING PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY AND PENSION OFFSETS.** CEUI, SEIU Local 511 stands in solidarity with the Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association of Connecticut in support of S.B. 836. Current law is written to allow municipalities to “off-set” disability pension payments by subtracting PPD payments, mandated by Workers’ Compensation statute, from monthly pension payments. However, OLR Report 2000-R-1180 clearly defines PPD as a benefit, not wages.

S.B. 836 would prohibit municipalities from diminishing or eliminating any pension benefits due to permanent partial disability benefits received by a retiree in accordance with section 31-308 or 31-308a.