

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Thursday, March 11

Senate Bill 999: AN ACT CONCERNING A JUST TRANSITION TO CLIMATE-PROTECTIVE ENERGY PRODUCTION AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT - Support

Senate Bill 1002: AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR ISSUES RELATED TO COVID-19, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER STAFFING MATTERS - Support

House Bill 6478: AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION - Support

House Bill 6595: AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR MATTERS RELATED TO COVID-19, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER STAFFING ISSUES - Support

Senate Kushner, Representative Porter, Senator Sampson, Representative Arora, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Stephen Anderson and I am the President of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union which represents thousands of state, municipal, and private sector workers, as well as over 11,500 retirees. I offer the following testimony on their behalf in support of Senate Bill 999, Senate Bill 1002, House Bill 6478, and House Bill 6595.

SB 999 will boost Connecticut's economy, expand employment opportunities for state residents, and ensure that the people working on critical renewable energy projects are fairly compensated. This bill will help Connecticut build an in-state clean technology workforce that will be ready to facilitate a transition to clean energy. Climate change is real, it is happening now, and SB 999 will position our state to be ready for the challenges and opportunities we face as a result of it.

The past year has been filled with uncertainty and fear for working people as a result of the ongoing and deadly pandemic that has brought pain and suffering to too many people. SB 1002 and HB 6595 begin to address the challenges faced by workers by creating stockpiles of personal protective equipment (PPE), providing paid sick leave, and increasing benefits when a job can result in a worker's death. These bills are not only a necessary response to the reality of the coronavirus, but also the right thing to do for the working people of Connecticut.

HB 6478 creates a workers' compensation presumption for COVID-19 which will allow essential workers to qualify for benefits when they are unable to go to work due to a COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms that are later diagnosed as COVID-19. Without it, workers have to use their own accumulated sick time, pay for treatment, and contend with wage losses all while navigating the lengthy appeals process with the Workers' Compensation Commission. This is a humane and commonsense approach to dealing with these situations that will benefit workers as well as the health and safety of those with whom they interact.

I urge committee members to support Senate Bill 999, Senate Bill 1002, House Bill 6478, and House Bill 6595.

Thank you.

Stephen Anderson
President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001