

Testimony of
Michael Baldwin M.D., Associate Professor Department of Radiology
Radiology Clerkship Director, and Associate Director, UConn Health Diagnostic Radiology Residency
Before the PUBLIC HEARING
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
REGARDING RAISED HOUSE BILL NO. 6595 & RAISED SENATE BILL NO. 1002
MARCH 11, 2021

My name is Michael Baldwin. I am a member of the UCHC-AAUP executive council. Our union represents over 600 physicians, dentists, and researchers who are faculty at UConn Health. Today I am here to support SB 1002 and H.B. No. 6595.

I currently practice clinically as a physician at UConn Health and I'm also a proud educator in the School of Medicine. In full disclosure, my wife Jennifer also practices as a physician at UConn Health. We have chosen to dedicate our professional lives to insure we play our part to make UConn Health successful and give back to the residents of Connecticut. This past year obviously tested all of us at UConn Health as it did our fellow residents across our state.

In our efforts to care for our patients and keep our caregivers safe, we fostered stronger bonds with our colleagues on the Storrs campus as well as with surrounding Connecticut communities and small businesses. We worked with our physics and engineering partners in Storrs as well as local business community to help make protective equipment for our frontline workers.

Our UConn Health colleagues worked tirelessly on behalf of our fellow Connecticut residents and I will be forever proud of our efforts. My wife and I lived apart from our children for three months in those early days of this challenge to ensure their safety last as we continued to practice clinically in the hospital and teach the future physicians of Connecticut.

Here is an example of what one of my colleagues said about their experience as a physician over the past year:

"Approximately one year ago, we admitted our first COVID patient. It was a time of much uncertainty that intensified the stress of an already overwhelmed health care system. As health care providers in addition to worrying about the welfare of our patients, we had to now also worry about shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), contracting the virus and taking it home to our loved ones, or even worse becoming disable or dying and leaving our children without parents and fending for themselves. Staying home was not an option. Seeing the gratitude from our community is important, but more than road signs, calling us heroes, or clapping for us is that the overall environment in which we currently practice must be improved. It will always be in our memory the suffering that our patients and their families have gone through (and many still are going through) because of this pandemic, and that we witnessed this firsthand."

Being truly recognized for the sacrifices we have made and the care we provided and continue to provide during this pandemic means that frontline employees are ensured we have adequate PPE, workers' compensation if we contract COVID at work, support for families left behind when frontline workers fall to the pandemic, and other support for those who have placed the health of the community ahead of their own needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.