

**Labor and Public Employees Committee
March 11, 2021 Public Hearing**

Testimony in Support of S.B. 1002 AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR ISSUES RELATED TO COVID-19, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER STAFFING MATTERS

Testimony in Support of H.B. 6595 AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR MATTERS RELATED TO COVID-19, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER STAFFING MATTERS

Senator Julie Kushner, Representative Robyn Porter, and distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, my name is Jamarah Barnaby-Anderson. I am a resident of Windsor, CT and a member of CEUI. I work at Department Of Veterans Affairs and I am a Cook Assistant.

I am submitting testimony in support of S.B. 1002 An Act Concerning Labor Issues Related to COVID-19, Personal Protective Equipment and Other Staffing Matters and H.B. 6595 An Act Concerning Labor Matters Related to COVID-19, Personal Protective Equipment and Other Staffing Matters. I would specifically like to focus on Sections 12 – 14 of both bills.

From the very beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, I was required to work in unpredictable and dangerous conditions. I was subjected to putting myself and family at risk for contracting a highly transmittable, treacherous, and contagious virus. In addition, I believe that it is vital to mention that I have moderate to severe respiratory conditions involving chronic asthma. The “invisible enemy” has killed and impacted millions worldwide with similar health conditions. Moreover, during a time when everyone was in Phase 1 lockdown to protect themselves from the virus. I was considered an exception because I am an essential employee. I was mandated to continue to come to work in harmful conditions, which is 30 minutes away from my home. Furthermore, there has been multiple occasions when there were COVID outbreaks throughout the DVA campus in both the Health Care department and the Main Dining room. As a Cook Assistant, I work in both areas that increases my risk of contracting the virus. I work in an environment with elderly individuals who are more susceptible to a various illnesses. Therefore, there were periods of time I truly feared coming to work. Unfortunately, since I was continuously exposed to the virus, I ended up being tested positive for the virus. Contracting the virus made my concerns and fears a reality. Please, take my testimony into consideration when considering the importance of providing hazardous pay to employees who are constantly putting themselves at risk in such trying times.

I urge the committee to support both S.B. 1002 and H.B. 6595.

Thank you.

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