



March 11, 2021

Good morning, Chairman Porter, Chairman Kushner and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Jody Barr. I am the executive director of Council 4 AFSCME, a union of 30,000 public and private employee members.

Our union strongly supports Senate Bill 1002, AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR ISSUES RELATED TO COVID-19, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER STAFFING MATTERS, House Bill 6595, AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR MATTERS RELATED TO COVID-19 and House Bill 6478, AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

As you know, many of our members have worked straight through this more than year long pandemic. Our correction employee members have worked in perhaps the most Covid contaminated and dangerous workplace. More than 25% of them have tested positive for Covid. Several of them have been seriously injured by this life-threatening disease. Yet they showed up for work every day, sometimes around the clock, to protect the citizens of Connecticut. Our police officer members, juvenile detention officers, courthouse workers, motor vehicle employees, paraprofessionals and many others have gotten Covid on the job. Some have brought this disease home and infected family members. This particularly weighs heavily on them. They knew the risk that they faced, but they showed up for work anyway. This is because they do their duty. Commensurately, the policy makers of Connecticut have a duty to provide for these workers and to recognize the sacrifice that they and their family members have made.

Council 4 strongly urges you to pass SB 1002 and HB 6595 that provide hazardous duty Covid pay of \$10 per hour for custodial employees during the duration of the pandemic. They provide burial benefits for workers who have died from on the job contracted Covid. These bills also provide important workers compensation protection, as does HB 6478. It is unconscionable that workers who contracted Covid on the job are being delayed and given the runaround by employers who care more about saving a little bit of money than they care about the sacrifice and well-being of their employees. We also support our fellow employees in health

care, food service, transportation and other essential and specialized risk settings in getting similar compensation.

Thank you for your consideration. We would be happy to answer any questions.