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617.523.6150

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973.824.3225

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412.471.0690

www.seiu32bj.org

DeShawn Brownell

Security Officer, Connecticut Adult Probation Office

**An Act Concerning Labor Issues Related to Covid-19, Personal Protective
Equipment and Other Staffing Matters, HB 6595 and SB 1002**

Committee on Labor and Public Employees

March 11, 2021

Hi, my name is the DeShawn Brownell. Thank you the all the members on this Labor Committee for hearing my testimony.

I work at an adult probation office for the state and I am an active member of my union, 32BJ SEIU. I've been at my job for five years now, and it can be challenging at the best of times. I come in contact with people every day, from the mailman to parolees and everyone in between.

In the pandemic, these challenges are much greater. Even though we have glass partitions, it doesn't mean an end to the risks we encounter. It's simply impossible to do our jobs and not interact with the public. Security officers might not face the dangers of police or nurses, but we are just as important. The state relies on me to protect all the assets of my building, from the physical space to the people who work and visit there.

However, I am not just an essential worker; I am a mandatory worker. I have to work to make a living; I don't have the luxury of staying home. I shouldn't have to use paid time off to quarantine on the chance I might have Covid-19 or was in contact with someone who might have it.

I bring my work home with me every night, in terms of its health effects. If I get a sniffle, I am terrified that I have this virus, so I stay away from family members. Plus, I have high blood pressure and also am epileptic, so I am somewhat at greater risk than most people my age. Security officers and all mandatory essential workers deserve hazard pay because we have to stand on the front lines. We deserve to get paid when we are called to quarantine, and not use our PTO. I think the Labor Covid bill would do a lot to support people like me who work to make Connecticut safe. Thank you.

