

LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 11, 2021

CHAIRWOMAN PORTER, CHAIRWOMAN KUSHNER, RANKING MEMBERS SAMPSON AND ARORA AND MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE, MY NAME IS CAMERON CHAMPLIN, I REPRESENT PLUMBERS AND PIPEFITTERS LOCAL UNION 777. LOCAL 777 IS COMPRISED OF APPROXIMATELY 3500 MEN AND WOMEN THAT LIVE AND WORK IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT. THIS TESTIMONY IS IN STRONG SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING BILLS: SB-999, SB-1002, HB-6478 AND HB-6595.

SB-999 REQUIRES ANY ENTITY THAT IS APPROVED TO CONSTRUCT A RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT AND IS SUBSIDISED BY THE TAX PAYERS OF THIS STATE HAS TO COMPENSATE THEIR EMPLOYEES WITH WAGES AND BENEFITS THAT ARE ADEQUATE ENOUGH FOR THAT EMPLOYEE TO BE A PRODUCTIVE PART OF SOCIETY. BY THAT I MEAN THAT THEY CAN ENJOY SOME EXPENDABLE INCOME WHICH IS SPENT ON SMALL BUSINESSES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. IT INCLUDES A REQUIREMENT THAT THE EMPLOYER HAS A CERTIFIED STATE OF CONNECTICUT APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM WHICH ENSURES A GOOD POSITIVE CAREER FOR THAT PERSON'S FUTURE. WITH THE REQUIREMENTS THAT ARE INCLUDED IN THIS BILL IT ENSURES THAT THESE PROJECTS WILL BE CONSTRUCTED WITH EMPLOYEES THAT ARE WELL TRAINED, COMPETENT CRAFTSMEN THAT ARE FAIRLY COMPENSATED WITH WAGES AND BENEFITS THAT WILL ALLOW THEM TO LIVE COMFORTABLY IN THIS STATE. WE CANNOT FORGET THAT THESE PROJECTS THAT ARE CONSTRUCTED WITH A PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENT IN PLACE IS AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CONTRACTOR, UNION AND THE COMMUNITY TO ENSURE THAT RESIDENTS OF THE COMMUNITY ARE INCLUDED IN THE PROJECT ALONG WITH RESIDENTS OF DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES. THIS WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON HELPING OUR ECONOMIC DOWNTURN TO RECOVER MORE QUICKLY.

SB-1002 AND HB-6595 ARE SIMILAR BILLS WHICH ADDRESS THE ISSUES THAT PUT OUR FRONT LINE ESSENTIAL WORKERS AT RISK BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF PPE. IN THE FUTURE THESE INADEQUACIES SHOULD NOT BE REPEATED. BECAUSE OF COVID 19 THE RECOGNITION OF HOW IMPORTANT THE WORKERS THAT WERE NEVER CONSIDERED EXTREMELY IMPORTANT HAS COME TO THE FOREFRONT. WHEN COVID FIRST IMPACTED OUR LIVES ESSENTIAL WORKERS WERE TOLD TO KEEP WORKING WITH NO PROMISE OF ANY EXTRA COMPENSATION. THEY KEPT WORKING AND KEPT OTHER LIVES AS NORMAL AS COULD BE EXPECTED. IF THEY HAD DEMANDED MORE COMPENSATION AT THAT TIME I AM SURE THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN GRANTED WHATEVER THEY ASKED BUT NOW THAT THE THREAT IS DIMINISHING OUR SYSTEM IS BEING USED TO KEEP THEM FROM COLLECTING WORKERS COMPENSATION IN MANY INSTANCES. THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO COLLECT THESE BENEFITS AND IF IT IS PROVEN LATER THAT THEY WEREN'T HONEST IN THEIR CLAIM THEY WOULD HAVE TO REIMBURSE THE FUND FOR THE AMOUNT THEY FALSELY COLLECTED. THESE ESSENTIAL WORKERS HAVE TO BE APPROPRIATELY COMPENSATED AND PROTECTED IN THE FUTURE.

HB-6478 WILL PUT THE BURDEN OF PROOF OF WHERE AN EMPLOYEE CONTRACTED COVID 19 ON THE EMPLOYER RATHER THAN THE EMPLOYEE FOR COLLECTING WORKERS COMPENSATION PAYMENTS. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS SHOULD BE IN EFFECT FOR ALL WORKER COMPENSATION CASES.

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**MOST EMPLOYEES ARE NOT KNOWLEDGEABLE ENOUGH OR FINANCIALLY
ABLE TO FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS THAT ARE INCLUDED IN OUR STATE
STATUTES. ALSO WHEN A WORKERS COMPENSATION CASE IS BEING
CONTESTED, UNDER THE CURRENT SYSTEM, THE WORKER'S PAYMENTS
CAN BE WITHHELD AND WITH NO INCOME THAT EMPLOYEE CAN BE
FORCED TO ACCEPT A LESSER AMOUNT THAN THEY DESERVE. WHEN HE
OR SHE HAVE MORTGAGE PAYMENTS, GROCERY PURCHASES AND OTHER
HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT THAT
LESSER AMOUNT.**

**THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY TODAY ON THESE VERY
IMPORTANT ISSUES. IF ANYMORE INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FROM ME
PLEASE CONTACT ME AT came@att.net or MY CELL (860) 287-0020.**

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY CAMERON CHAMPLIN