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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA – UAW

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Testimony of John Murphy on behalf of United Auto Workers Local 376  
and the Connecticut Citizen Action Group

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

**In support of:**

**HB 6478 – An Act Concerning Workers Compensation**

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

Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, ranking members Sampson and Arora, members of the committee,

My name is John Murphy. I live in East Hartford, Connecticut. and I am testifying on behalf of United Auto Workers Local 376 in favor of HB 6478 An Act Concerning Workers Compensation, and SB 1002 & HB 6595, both entitled An Act Concerning Labor Matters Related to Covid-19, Personal Protective Equipment and Other Staffing Issues.

Sections 1 of HB 6478 expands workers compensation benefits for workers who lost or function of a member or limb. Some of my co-workers from when I used to work on construction have experienced extreme financial hardship due to the loss of function of limbs.

As for Section 2, these protections are sorely needed. Again, as a construction worker I have witnessed co-workers who were pressured from filing workers compensation claims or deliberately misled that a claim had been filed on their behalf. Firings are disguised through laying off workers for lack of work, but there was a direct correlation about workers who filed workers comp claims or raised health and safety concerns and who were the first workers laid off. Hopefully, the provision allowing workers to bring civil action against offending employers will make these employers think twice.

Section 4 extends the period for essential workers who have contracted COVID-19 to be presumed to have contracted COVID-19 on the job for as long as the Governor's public health emergency is in effect. I have a neighbor who works in the medical field who contracted COVID-19 last April, which was within the time frame of Executive Order 7JJJ. While his employer filed his claim promptly and he started receiving checks during his 59 day hospital stay, he knows of other people in the medical field working for different employers who contracted COVID-19 after Executive Order 7JJ expired that have had their Workers Compensation claims contested. Section 4 delivers justice to these essential workers who have put their lives on the line just by going to work every day to serve and protect us.

Raising the Workers Compensation burial benefit in Section 5 has been sorely overdue since the benefit has not been increased for 24 years.

For these reasons, please pass HB 6478 and SB 1002 & HB 6595, both of which share many of the same points contained in HB 6478. Thank you.