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Before the Labor Committee

In Support of SB 1002: AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR ISSUES RELATED TO COVID-19, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER STAFFING MATTERS and In Support of HB 6595: AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR MATTERS RELATED TO COVID-19, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER STAFFING ISSUES

Good Morning Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the Committee. My name is Yesenia Ortiz and I am a Dental Assistant in the Department of Corrections. I am testifying today in support of Senate Bill 1002 and House Bill 6595.

Back in March of 2020, when cases of coronavirus began trickling into the state of CT, the Governor chose to close down the state in order to avoid the rapid spreading of the virus. The Department of Corrections had several issues as our institutions are employed with mostly essential workers and employees had to report to work without proper PPE.

At that time, the entire state was suffering shortages of PPE, forcing the staff working the front lines to operate without proper equipment. This lack of much needed safety equipment not only jeopardized our lives but also the lives of our loved ones at home who did not choose this.

I made a pledge to work in a hazardous environment and I knew that I would be exposing myself to potentially dangerous patients and work in hazardous conditions. My family was also aware of all the dangers I could face but none of these dangerous conditions directly affected them in the way that the corona virus does which does not discriminate. Some of our members had the virus and they brought it home to their loved ones. Some of our members died and some of their families died. We lost patients and the ones that survived are dealing with severe medical conditions due to side effects from the deadly virus.

Other States and frontline workers have been given the hero's pay and CT should do the same for all those essential workers who kept the State running under deplorable conditions. Please pass Senate Bill 1002 and House Bill 6595.