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Mary Beth Tracey
Security Officer, Gold Building, Hartford

**An Act Concerning Labor Issues Related to Covid-19, Personal Protective
Equipment and Other Staffing Matters, HB6595 and SB 1002**

Committee on Labor and Public Employees
March 11, 2021

Good afternoon, members of the Labor Committee. My name is Mary Tracey and I was a Security Officer at the Gold Building in Hartford until two weeks ago, when I was laid off. I am here with others from my union, 32BJ SEIU, to ask that you pass the Covid Labor Bill.

All the members of 32BJ have been on the front line of this pandemic, performing essential jobs as cleaners, teachers and security officers, like me. The work we security officers do always carries risks, because you never know who is going to walk through the door. Now, everyone who walks through the door is a risk in an entirely new way. We can't fully protect ourselves, either. We might have masks, but we still have to interact with visitors to the building in the same way, making the risk even greater.

To address that risk, we support several items in this bill.

First, essential workers should have hazard pay – Essential Worker Pay-- retroactive to the beginning of the pandemic. If you recall, that was a central part of the HEROES Act, but as the pandemic has gone on and on, people have returned to their old ways of thinking. When it started, everyone suddenly realized that security officers, grocery store clerks, janitors and so many other working people could not work from home. Suddenly, people appreciated us. That has faded a little, I think. Yet we still risk everything, and we still aren't paid much. It's not right.

Second, if we need to quarantine or become infected with Covid 19 on the job, we should be entitled to receive payment from the job and not have it taken from our Paid Time Off or Sick Time. For anyone that is considered a "Long Hauler," that is, anyone for whom the effects or symptoms of Covid returns, our time for that should also be compensated and not deducted from our time off.

I hope you agree these are reasonable requests given the requirements of our jobs in the pandemic. Thank you for hearing my testimony.