



**Testimony by Carl Chisem, President  
Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511**

**In Opposition to S.B. 920 AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

**Transportation Committee Public Hearing  
March 3, 2021**

Senator Cassano, Representative Lemar and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Carl Chisem and I am President of the Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511. We represent over 3,600 blue collar maintenance and service State workers. Our members provide valuable services within our state facilities. They cook, clean, repair, maintain and deliver in Connecticut's State buildings, hospitals, college campuses, airports, roads, bridges, and parks. They represent the true diversity of our great state. I am submitting testimony against S.B. 920 An Act Concerning Public Private Partnerships.

Since the years of the Rowland administration, the General Assembly has worked hard to implement limits and create transparency regarding public-private partnerships. Before such safeguards were created, the level of corruption was widespread, and the Rowland administration was able to use its power for personal gain. S.B. 920 removes all those important restrictions on public-private partnerships and, once again, creates an opening for tax dollars to be spent without the much-needed protections that are currently in place.

Specifically, S.B. 920 would remove the following restrictions that help ensure the oversight of the Executive branch in relation to state contracting and procurement protocols:

- There is currently a limit of five public private partnerships that can be authorized between October 1, 2011 and January 1, 2020. S.B. 920 would remove that limit permitting any state agency, upon approval of the Governor, to establish one or more public private partnerships.
- There is currently a 50-year limit on the duration of a public-private partnership project. S.B. 920 removes any such time boundary.
- Currently, public-private partnerships are limited to early childcare, health or housing facilities and transportation projects. S.B. 920 removes those limits, allowing for any state government operation to be considered as a potential public-private partnership.
- Currently, authorization by the legislature is needed for projects to be considered for public-private partnerships. S.B. 920 removes this process, giving the Executive Branch the authority to approve such projects.

- Currently, the State Contracting Standards Board is granted oversight in determining whether or not a proposed partnership meets a cost-benefit analysis requirement of a cost savings to the state of 10% or more as well as the condition that the public-private partnership would not diminish the quality of service already provided. S.B. 920 removes this oversight of the State Contracting Standard Board, leaving the decision to approve a project in the hands of the Governor and his political appointees.

Research and lived experience show that public-private partnerships can be successful, in some cases, but can also lead to job loss, increased costs and declining services. Why would we remove all the restrictions that have proven reliable in preventing further corruption? There is so much more money to be saved by strengthening our current system of contracting. The state should focus on what is working and act in ways to improve current law, not weaken it.

I urge the committee to oppose this legislation.

Thank you.