



Testimony in Opposition to Proposed S.B. No. 152

Submitted by Frank Ricci, Labor Fellow

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My name is Frank Ricci and I serve as Yankee Institute's Labor Fellow. Yankee Institute is a policy organization dedicated to empowering Connecticut's people to forge a brighter future for themselves and their families.

Yankee Institute opposes this concept bill that seeks to have state government intervene in the free market. By creating arbitrary standards or regulations, it creates an imbalance in the employee/employer relationship that could artificially reduce productivity, costing jobs and reducing municipalities' tax bases.

The bill's concept language — “[to] create protections for warehouse workers against unreasonable quotas” — appears to be a benign, feel-good policy. How could anyone oppose a bill that is only against “unreasonable quotas?”

But there are unintended consequences to such sweeping policies. In this case, if government's heavy hand reduces productivity, it could increase costs and decrease the ability of Connecticut's businesses to compete in the marketplace with out-of-state enterprises that are not subject to our laws. In the end, this could result in more in-state businesses closing, fleeing our state or automating sooner than they otherwise would. At the very least, it would deter new businesses open to locating in our great state.

Certainly, it is important for Connecticut's workforce to be well-protected. But working conditions are already heavily regulated through wage and hour regulations and state and federal labor law. Worker safety is covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). Any worker may file an anonymous complaint if a policy or action is impacting worker safety, and it will be investigated by a federal agency free from the threat of retaliation.

Likewise, businesses are already incentivized to keep workers safe. An injured worker results in lost time, decreasing productivity and increasing insurance rates. A warehouse that uses a matrix to measure work can evaluate worker efficiencies, thereby making the business more productive and profitable, which in turn enables improved working conditions and increased employee pay.

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In Connecticut, it is not uncommon to see warehouses offering above minimum wage for workers plus benefits, along with signing bonuses. Many of these companies also provide upward mobility to workers who excel, and provide incentives to meet quotas, which set clear productivity targets for workers to meet. A quota system in a warehouse setting ensures workers can produce at a sustainable pace, providing them with a sense of accomplishment and pride in their work while avoiding injury.

Unfortunately, responsible business often finds itself targeted by a state government that imposes needless regulations without knowledge of or regard for the actual cost to workers and employers alike. The state should be supporting job creators — not indulging a grievance culture, where mediocrity is rewarded at the expense of responsible business owners and taxpayers alike.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testify before this distinguished committee.

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