



**Public Hearing Testimony of
Danté Bartolomeo
Commissioner
Department of Labor
Labor and Public Employees Committee
March 2, 2023**

Good Afternoon, Representative Sanchez, Senator Kushner, Representative Ackert, Senator Sampson, Representative Wilson, Senator Cabrera, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with written testimony regarding **Senate Bill 152, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF WAREHOUSE WORKERS**. My name is Danté Bartolomeo and I am the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL).

I first must register concern with the Committee that SB 152 will necessitate significant state funding for CTDOL to administer.

This bill permits employees to file a complaint with CTDOL alleging that the obligation of meeting a quota interfered with their right to a meal period break or required an employee to violate the United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (Federal OSHA's) laws. I note that CTDOL's Connecticut Occupational Safety and Health Administration (CONN-OSHA) Division has jurisdiction over state and municipal public sector employers for enforcement of safety and health regulations. We have no enforcement authority over private sector employers that fall under Federal OSHA's jurisdiction. Although our CONN-OSHA Division has expertise in Federal OSHA law, the Division is funded by federal grants which limit its enforcement to public sector employers. Any work that deviates from our authorized jurisdiction cannot be charged to these federal grants.

The bill also requires the Labor Commissioner to hold a hearing upon the receipt of a complaint. The hearings required are to be held under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (UAPA). The proceedings under the UAPA permit the parties to inspect and copy relevant records and documents, and at a hearing, to respond, cross-examine other parties, and present evidence and argument on all issues involved. These hearings take substantial time due to the nature of the UAPA, and accordingly, additional staff and funding would be required.

Lastly, there are provisions that require CTDOL to perform outreach to employees and employers to educate them about this bill, as well as coordinate strategic enforcement with the Workers' Compensation Commission. These actions would require additional funding for staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony. I am available to answer any questions you may have.