

**Labor and Public Employees Committee
Thursday, March 9, 2023**

SB 1178: AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS - Support

SB 1180: AN ACT CONCERNING RIDESHARE AND DELIVERY DRIVER MINIMUM STANDARDS - Support

HB 6859: AN ACT CONCERNING PREDICTABLE SCHEDULING - Support

HB 6861: AN ACT ADOPTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE STATE WORKFORCE AND RETIRING EMPLOYEES - Support

Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, Senator Sampson, Representative Ackert, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Travis Woodward, I am a resident of Hamden, and an engineer in the Connecticut Department of Transportation. I am also the president of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union representing over 23,000 state, municipal, board of education, active and retired, public and private sector workers. I offer the following testimony in support of Senate Bill 1178, Senate Bill 1180, House Bill 6859, and House Bill 6861:

The four bills on which I am testifying might cover different subject matters, but they are all focused on empowering workers. Supporting workers, whether they are in the public or private sector, is always critical, but especially now in the current economy. Whether it is expanding paid sick days or providing predictable scheduling or protecting rideshare and delivery drivers or addressing discrimination and staffing issues in state service, these bills will make real progress for working people.

SB 1178: AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS. In 2011, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to require certain employers to provide paid sick days. Connecticut has since been joined by Arizona, California, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Washington, D.C. Now is the time to update and strengthen our state's paid sick days law and bring it in line with the laws passed after Connecticut led the way. Senate Bill 1178 will ensure that all workers have access to paid sick days while reducing the waiting period to use them. No one should ever have to choose between their health and a paycheck.

SB 1180: AN ACT CONCERNING RIDESHARE AND DELIVERY DRIVER MINIMUM STANDARDS. Rideshare drivers and app workers in Connecticut are getting a raw deal. Uber, Lyft, Instacart, DoorDash, and other app-based companies are constantly changing their policies and tweaking their algorithms to increase profits. This leaves drivers short on pay and long on frustration. SB 1180 will grant drivers a new set of rights; including minimum payments, trip receipts to both workers and passengers, a requirement for network companies to pay for other fees incurred during trips, as well as establish reciprocity with neighboring states in order to allow Connecticut drivers to pick up passengers in those states. These drivers, like all workers, deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. SB 1180 is an important step in that direction.

HB 6859: AN ACT CONCERNING PREDICTABLE SCHEDULING. Every worker in Connecticut should have access to a stable job that provides opportunity and treats them with respect. Unfortunately, tens of thousands of workers in Connecticut begin their work week without knowing their schedule. They work "on-call", with unpredictable, fluctuating workweeks that they can't control. They are denied full-time hours, so they don't receive benefits - and they cannot seek another job, as they don't have a fixed schedule. HB 6859 gives workers the stability they need, ensuring that more than 140,000 retail, food service, long-term care, and hotel workers have more predictable schedules and paychecks. The bill will ensure that employers treat their employees with respect, setting their schedules in advance and providing compensation for any late changes.

HB 6861: AN ACT ADOPTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE STATE WORKFORCE AND RETIRING EMPLOYEES. Discrimination has no place at any worksite. HB 6861 will ensure that state managers and supervisors cannot retaliate or discriminate against an employee who alleges discrimination. Imagine going to your manager in good faith, to talk about the discrimination you are facing at work and, instead of being heard and your experience respected, you're retaliated against or told to be quiet. The bill calls for a Racial Justice Ombudsperson who will be responsible for fostering a workplace where managerial authorities are accountable to lead and model antiracist practices, and make changes needed to ensure an antiracist, equitable workplace for all. Our Nation's work towards "a more perfect Union" continues, and HB 6861 will provide all state workers with the protections against discriminatory and retaliatory behavior that no one should have to deal with when they are just trying to do their job. This bill also empowers key stakeholders such as state employees, commissioners, the Comptroller, and policymakers to use data and planning to help make educated decisions when addressing staffing issues in state service.

As I stated at the start of my testimony, these are four very different bills, but they are united in their intent to give working people in Connecticut the support they need. I urge committee members to support SB 1178, SB 1180, HB 6859, and HB 6861.

I would like to thank you for hearing my testimony.

Travis Woodward
President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001