

**Testimony of**

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**House Bill 6381: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE REGARDING THE STATE  
WORKFORCE AND RETIRING EMPLOYEES.**

**Committee on LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES**

**February 9, 2021**

Good morning Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Barbara Fernandez and I have been a manager at the State of Connecticut for sixteen years. I am here to testify in favor of House Bill 6381: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE REGARDING THE STATE WORKFORCE AND RETIRING EMPLOYEES.

I am supporting this bill because the task force will create a much-needed roadmap to ensure the smooth transition of state services as managers start to retire next year. Managers are the backbone for state services; we provide the technical expertise, leadership and dedication that keeps the state running.

I learned how critical managers are during the ReOpen CT project during the beginning of the pandemic last year. At my previous state job, I worked 10-12 hour days and every weekend starting March 13, 2020 until the first week of July 2020. I did not receive additional compensation. I received some comp time only after our executive director waged a fierce battle to get me that time. The resistance I faced was rooted in the belief that as a manager, you have to work until the job is done, even if that means working well over 40 hours a week. I understand that in an emergency we all have to go above and beyond our normal duties but this was not the first time and this is not the only administration that has done this. For that reason many union state employees refuse to become managers because they know that as managers they will loose all control of their job duties and their rights to protest.

State managers were tasked with implementing new programs and systems during ReOpen CT while also managing staff remotely, ensuring that these systems and programs are successful, and continuing to provide an adequate level of customer service to the constituents of the state. Managers, through increases hours and dedication to state service, along with the staff they manage have made these initiatives successful

Despite all the efforts that managers have made just during the pandemic, we were still passed up for a raise in January 2021 that collective bargaining unit employees received. This has led to many managers feeling demoralized and disrespected, especially after the years of sacrifices mangers have made in regards to increased contributions and lack od merit or COLA raises. I now work at the University of Connecticut were things are notably different and mangers are treated like the professionals we are.

As managers being to leave state service, we must prepare for this transition and look at the barriers that exist for mangers in state service. Managers cannot be solely replaced with systems and consultants, we need experienced people to implement the systems and provide the service our citizens demand.

Bill 6381 will provide us with the plan to help the state move forward. I urge you to support/oppose this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Fernandez