



**Labor and Public Employees Committee
Tuesday, February 9, 2021**

SUPPORT:

- 1.H.B. No. 5158(COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING BREASTFEEDING IN THE WORKPLACE.**
- 2.H.B. No. 6376(RAISED) AN ACT CREATING A RESPECTFUL AND OPEN WORLD FOR NATURAL HAIR.**
- 3.H.B. No. 6377(RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING LABOR PEACE AGREEMENTS AND A MODERN AND EQUITABLE CANNABIS WORKFORCE.**
- 4.H.B. No. 6378(RAISED) AN ACT CODIFYING PREVAILING WAGE CONTRACT RATES.**
- 5.H.B. No. 6379(RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' RIGHTS.**
- 6.H.B. No. 6380(RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISCLOSURE OF SALARY RANGE FOR A VACANT POSITION.**
- 7.H.B. No. 6381(RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE REGARDING THE STATE WORKFORCE AND RETIRING EMPLOYEES.**
- 8.H.B. No. 6382(RAISED) AN ACT STRENGTHENINGTHE PROBATE COURT SYSTEM.**
- 9.H.B. No. 6383(RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CALL CENTERS AND NOTICE OF CLOSURES.**
- 10.S.B. No. 836(RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY AND PENSION OFFSETS.**

Testimony: Stacey Zimmerman, SEIU CT State Council

Chairs Kushner, Porter members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Stacey Zimmerman and I am here representing the Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council. SEIU CT represents 65,000 members both in the public and private sectors; SEIU has over 2 million members in the United States and Canada.

SEIU supports the entire agenda of today's meeting. This agenda has the ability to stabilize work places and addresses both longstanding and COVID-19 related employment issues. We applaud the committee for proposing and hearing legislation on such important matters.

The bill I would like to spend the bulk of my time on is number 8 on the agenda, H.B. No. 6382(RAISED) AN ACT STRENGTHENINGTHE PROBATE COURT SYSTEM
SEIU strongly supports the ability of the probate workers to form a union if they choose and modernize the probate court system.

Connecticut ranks 40th per capita of public employees to population, yet we still provide tremendous and needed services to our residents. Since the John Rowland era there has been a continued assault on our public sector. This is an opportunity to demonstrate that we as a State

respect and value these workers and the sacrifices they have made not just during these extraordinary pandemic times but throughout their service.

This proposal rights a wrong that transpired during the last modernization of the probate system. The clerks, administrators and staff are left in a system of employment that honestly does not exist anymore.

We as a state managed to consolidate and advance the Probate Courts but left the staff behind. We have the opportunity to correct this wrong.

This bill will give the workers the right to collective bargain if they so choose and truly understand who the employer is of record. Clarifying this will not only help the workers but also the judges and the entire system.

The inequities of the existing system have become crystalized with the pandemic situation with a schizophrenic patchwork of rules and demands over the different probate regions. Some work from home some go to the office, some offices seem safe while others are acting as if everything is normal. This has been a legitimate drag on moral and in some cases puts staff at risk.

We must not let the fear of change by some officials stand in the way of creating a functional and equitable Probate Court System for the future.

I thank you for hearing my testimony. I urge the members of the committee to support House Bill 6382 and the rest of today's agenda.