

Appropriations Committee  
March 26, 2021

**House Bill 5149: AN ACT EXCLUDING REIMBURSEMENTS TO STATE EMPLOYEES FOR MILEAGE AND PAYMENTS FOR OVERTIME FROM THE CALCULATION OF RETIREMENT INCOME. - Oppose**

**House Bill 5209: AN ACT EXCLUDING OVERTIME PAY AND LEGISLATIVE MILEAGE ALLOWANCES FROM THE CALCULATION OF STATE PENSIONS - Oppose**

**House Bill 5750: AN ACT EXCLUDING REIMBURSEMENTS FOR MILEAGE AND PAYMENTS FOR OVERTIME FROM THE CALCULATION OF RETIREMENT INCOME - Oppose**

**House Bill 5754: AN ACT EXCLUDING MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENTS AND OVERTIME PAY FROM THE CALCULATION OF RETIREMENT INCOME - Oppose**

**House Bill 6662: AN ACT DECLARING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND ESTABLISHING THE COMMISSION ON RACIAL EQUITY IN PUBLIC HEALTH - Support**

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and members of the Appropriations:

My name is Stephen Anderson and I am the President of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union which represents thousands of state, municipal, and private sector workers, as well as over 11,500 retirees. I offer the following testimony in opposition to House Bills 5149, 5209, 5750, and 5754 and in support of House Bill 6662.

CSEA opposes House Bills 5149, 5209, 5750, and 5754. These bills would remove overtime from state employees' pension calculations. This is wrong because for many workers, especially those employed in public safety, corrections, and our health systems overtime is a required part of their work. It is important to understand that the reason overtime exists at all is because of short staffing that exists across state service. This has been a problem for many years, one exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but even without adequate staffing the work still needs to get done. The state cannot leave prisoners unguarded, our streets unprotected, nor vulnerable patients unattended. Furthermore, efforts to weaken pensions and lower standards are moving Connecticut in the wrong direction. We should be looking to strengthen the benefits that give our state's workers a stable retirement.

Our pension plan covers tens of thousands of workers, split, relatively, evenly between white-collar professionals and blue-collar hourly workers. White-collar workers tend to get paid extra because they do not get overtime calculated into their salary. Rather, when you become a supervisor or you become a professional employee, you get an increase, part of the reason you get that increase is you know that if you do work more than 40 hours, you are pulled away from your family, it is not going to result in extra money.

Blue-collar workers, however, do not get that salary increase. They work hourly and if they are pulled away from their families for extra work, they get overtime. If these bills were to become law, blue-collar workers would face the biggest impact. Removing overtime from pensions has no effect on managers and professionals but it will cut retirement benefits for snowplow drivers who spend 30 years away from their families to keep our roads clear. And retirement benefits for nurses and CNAs who pay double day care bills because they spend a career of constant forced overtime caring for the developmentally disabled and the mentally ill. It would cut retirement benefits for corrections officers held over almost every week of their working lives because there aren't enough co-workers to relieve them so they can go home to their families. And first responders who can't go home because their job is to run toward the dangers that the rest of us run away from. These bills are an attack on these brave and vital workers.

CSEA supports House Bill 6662 because all working families, black, brown and white, are diminished by a nation that over a century and a half after the formal elimination of slavery, still leaves black people and other people of color victimized by systems that institutionalize racism – criminal justice, education, housing, healthcare, and the economy.

We know as union members, black, brown, and white, that we can only rise together, and that the divisions caused by racial oppression only help to sustain a system in which all working families, the vast majority of Americans, continue to fall behind, where most are only a paycheck away from bankruptcy, where economic insecurity is the defining characteristic of almost everyone except the tiny percentage of multimillionaires and billionaires who are thriving in today's broken system.

I urge every member of the committee to reject House Bills 5149, 5209, 5750, and 5754 and to support House Bill 6662.

Thank you.

Stephen Anderson  
President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001