

Public Hearing Testimony
Appropriations Committee
March 26, 2021

Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is William Boucher and I am the Interim President of the Connecticut Police and Fire Union. I represent hard-working, dedicated public safety professionals employed by the State of Connecticut.

I am submitting written testimony **in opposition** of the following legislative bills:

Raised H.B. 1079, AN ACT CONCERNING COMPETITIVENESS AND LABOR COSTS AT THE CONNECTICUT AIRPORT AUTHORITY.

The Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) recorded an increase in passenger growth for (7) seven straight years from 2012 through 2019. In 2020, Bradley International Airport was named the eighth best airport in the United States by readers of Condé Nast Traveler (a major on-line travel magazine). This growth and success is a culmination of many factors that all start with valued, dedicated employees.

This bill does not impact unionized/classified employees, but it does target managerial staff. A staff with many employees hired by State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation prior to the formation of the CAA in 2012. Airport unclassified employees (managers) currently participate in State of Connecticut employee retirement plans.

This legislation will cause **at-will** employees to **have to choose** whether to sacrifice a major employment benefit while under the watchful eye of Executive Director, Kevin Dillon. Good benefits are what retain good employees. These unclassified managers are just as important to the success of the 2nd largest airport in New England as their classified union subordinates. Compromising their benefits is unnecessary. Bradley's record over the last decade reflects consistent growth without any change to employee pension and benefit structure. We see no reason to change it now. Therefore, we **oppose** this bill.

Proposed S.B. 134, AN ACT REQUIRING THE COMPTROLLER TO FUND THE UNFUNDED PENSION LIABILITY PORTION OF FRINGE BENEFIT COSTS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER.

Proper funding of state employee pension's is important and despite decades of pension liability mismanagement by past General Assemblies, UCH continues to retain skilled workers who provide extraordinary services for the citizens of Connecticut. In early 2017, States employees and the State of Connecticut implemented a plan to paydown pension liability by 2032, just 11 (eleven) years from now.

This proposed bill's sole purpose is to facilitate the privatization of UConn Health, as it is written in the bill's "statement of purpose". The limited text in the proposed bill is extremely vague for a vast concept that is so intricate. For that reason, we **oppose** this legislation.

Proposed H.B. 5209, AN ACT EXCLUDING OVERTIME PAY AND LEGISLATIVE MILEAGE ALLOWANCES FROM THE CALCULATION OF STATE PENSIONS

This bill proposes two actions. One, to remove legislator's mileage from the calculation of **their** state employee pensions. Considering that no state employee, other than state legislators, have mileage included in their state pensions, we believe the General Assembly should consider this action. Two, to remove overtime from calculation of state employee pensions. Pension benefits are a mandatory subject of collective bargaining and are therefore not applicable to change in this forum. We **oppose** this action.

Proposed H.B. 5149, AN ACT EXCLUDING REIMBURSEMENTS TO STATE EMPLOYEES FOR MILEAGE AND PAYMENTS FOR OVERTIME FROM THE CALCULATION OF RETIREMENT INCOME.

Pension benefits are a mandatory subject of collective bargaining and are therefore not applicable to change in this forum. We **oppose** this action.

Proposed H.B. 5750, AN ACT EXCLUDING REIMBURSEMENTS FOR MILEAGE AND PAYMENTS FOR OVERTIME FROM THE CALCULATION OF RETIREMENT INCOME.

Pension benefits are a mandatory subject of collective bargaining and are therefore not applicable to change in this forum. We **oppose** this action.

Proposed H.B. 5754, AN ACT EXCLUDING MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENTS AND OVERTIME PAY FROM THE CALCULATION OF RETIREMENT INCOME.

Pension benefits are a mandatory subject of collective bargaining and are therefore not applicable to change in this forum. We **oppose** this action.

I ask for your support in voting against these poorly crafted bills.

Sincerely,

William Boucher
Connecticut Police and Fire Union