

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5444

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING UNION WORKERS.

Vote Date: 3/22/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/15/2022

File No.: 304

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor and Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Current state legislation lacks protection for employees who are attempting to unionize. Since some businesses are controlled by the federal legislation that governs labor relations and others are controlled by the Connecticut state government, there is a discrepancy between how federally-governed and state-governed businesses are allowed to operate. Unions and employees who are attempting to unionize need increased protections, particularly during strikes. This legislation would fill the gap between the two by incorporating some similar provisions from the federal legislation into state legislation.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None stated.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut General Assembly, House Majority Leader Jason Rojas; supports this bill stating it is inspired by Congress' lack of action on the PRO-Act. This law would update the State Labor Relations Act. By adding a deadline to begin negotiations by, employers are no longer able to unjustifiably delay negotiations.

Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 777, Cameron Champlin; supports this bill stating that it would help employees unionize and to not be intimidated by an employer because of these attempts.

Connecticut AFL-CIO, President, Ed Hawthorne; supports this bill stating that it would enhance the State Labor Relations Act, which is currently limited in scope. The current SLRA

does not cover any employer subject to the National Labor Relations Act, municipal employees, members of religious orders, agricultural workers or domestic workers. The provisions in the bill would "level the playing field" for workers. The provision that adds a deadline to begin negotiations is especially important because this takes away employers' ability to procrastinate and delay negotiations.

Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council, Stacey Zimmerman; supports the bill, but no other information was offered.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA), Vice President of Public Policy, Eric Gjede; opposes this bill stating there is duplication of federal law that protects striking workers, but it does not add the protections for businesses that is in the same federal law. The bill does not distinguish between lawful or unlawful strike purposes. Another reason for opposition is that the bill places the permanent replacement of a striking worker as an unfair labor practice. This causes the employer to risk being unable to provide products or services that people depend on.

Reported by: Alexa Moyer

Date: April 4, 2022