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**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
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**Testimony from David LaFemina, International Representative
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE),
AFL-CIO**

**Labor & Public Employees Committee
March 7, 2019**

**SB 2 An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage
HB 5004 An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage**

Dear Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

My name is David LaFemina and I live in *Madison, CT (101 Rep/12th Sen District)*. I am an International Representative for the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE). I am submitting this letter in in favor of SB 2 An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage and HB 5004 An Act Raising the Minimum Fair Wage.

I support SB 2 and HB 5004 because it will gradually increase the minimum wage to \$15 by 2022 and then index it to inflation. I represent public employees throughout Connecticut. One group that would greatly benefit by passage of the proposal is Para Educators. Those who work in this field are the unsung heroes of the education community. They provide not only educational support, they provide emotional and physical support to those students who have challenges in education and everyday tasks.

Increasing wages over a period of time will allow those Para Educators who have been grossly under paid for decades to improve their financial condition. Those who belong to a collective bargaining unit will have more bargaining power over wages as the state wage progress improving the standard of living in this profession. This would allow school districts to retain qualified dedicated employees who serve the most fragile in a school.

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Another positive outcome of this bill is to the economy within the small towns of Connecticut where individually owned businesses thrive based on the support of its' residents. In a Community such as Newtown where I represent the Para Educators, the majority of small shops are owned and operated by residents themselves. Increasing wages allows for the possibility of additional disposable income being put into the local marketplace sustaining the town and its' tax base.

Our state has lagged behind in recognizing the need to make living wages in this state a reality. Our failure to ensure residents and their families a livable wage and a quality of life we risk losing working families to nearby states like Massachusetts and New York.

This state is one of the most expensive in the country to live and support a family, continuing down the path of low wages with no assistance from the elected leaders will prove to have serious consequences on generations to come here in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important legislation

David LaFemina
International Representative
IFPTE, AFL-CIO