



Connecticut AFL-CIO
Executive Board Meeting
April 13, 2023

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The Connecticut AFL-CIO is pursuing a robust and varied set of bills to strengthen Connecticut's working families during the 2023 legislative session. The state federation is also assisting affiliates with a number of other legislative proposals. The full 2023 legislative agenda can be found [here](#).

Most committees have completed their initial work, having held public hearings, and passing bills they raised. The Appropriations and Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committees will wrap up their work on April 21st and April 20th, respectively.

Most of the Connecticut AFL-CIO's priority bills have been reported out of their committees of cognizance, including:

- **[SB 938](#)** An Act Concerning Unemployment Benefits for Striking Workers that will allow striking workers to collect unemployment benefits after a two-week waiting period was JF'd from the Labor & Public Employees Committee. It is pending on the Senate Calendar.
- **[SB 1177](#)** An Act Concerning One Fair Wage eliminates the subminimum wages for tipped workers and youth workers was JF'd from the Labor & Public Employees Committee. It is pending on the Senate Calendar.
- **[SB 1179](#)** clarifies the intent of the original Paid Family and Medical Leave law by allowing workers to collect benefits concurrently between the PFML program and employer-sponsored short-term disability insurance plans, as long as an employee does not receive more than 100% of their regular wages. It was JF'd from the Labor & Public Employees Committee and is pending on the Senate Calendar, but will likely be referred to the Insurance & Real Estate Committee for further action. *(Beverly Brakeman has been retained on a temporary basis to expand the Connecticut AFL-CIO's capacity by managing the lobbying efforts on this bill and coordinating with impacted affiliates.)*
- **[HB 6699](#)** clarifies the definition of "bona fide labor organization" and requires the Department of Labor to establish a list of bona fide labor organizations that meet that definition so that the Department of Consumer Protection may ensure cannabis license applicants sign legitimate labor peace agreements. It was JF'd by the General Law Committee and is pending on the House Calendar but is expected to be combined with other bills that adjust additional parts of the cannabis statute.
- **[HB 6854](#)** provides tax incentives to developers who build grocery stores in food deserts and includes labor peace agreements and prevailing wage standards as a condition of receiving those tax incentives.

It was JF'd from the Human Services Committee and is pending on the House Calendar. It is expected to be referred to the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee for further consideration.

- [HB 6874](#) includes language to correct a drafting error in last session's captive audience bill that adjusted employer penalties when they violate the new law. It was JF'd from the Judiciary Committee and is pending on the House Calendar.

***Other Connecticut AFL-CIO priority bills are pending
in the Appropriations and Finance Committees, including:***

- [HB 6881](#), a comprehensive bill to invest in and empower paraeducators was raised by the Education Committee but sent to the Appropriations Committee without a vote. It establishes a living wage for paraeducators and requirements that districts provide affordable healthcare benefits, defined benefit pensions, high quality professional development and meaningful access to PPT and 504 meetings for the students they serve. It was raised by the Education Committee, but referred to the Appropriations Committee without voting on it.
- [HB 5673](#) An Act Concerning the Reformation of Certain Taxes and Tax Equity implements Recovery For All's equity agenda to create tax fairness and generate the revenue needed to fund programs and services that build equity. It has had a public hearing and awaits action in the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee.

***The Connecticut AFL-CIO has also testified on and supported affiliates
on many of their priority bills, including:***

- [HB 5003](#) An Act Concerning Education Funding in Connecticut accelerates a 10-year increase in Education Cost Sharing grants that fund public schools and funds charter schools at the same rate as traditional public schools. It was JFS'd by the Education Committee and is expected to be referred to the Appropriations Committee.
- [HB 5854](#) An Act Concerning the Number of Wage and Hour Inspectors at the Department of Labor would reduce wage theft by requiring the Department of Labor to maintain a staff of at least 45 wage and hour inspectors. It has been JF'd from the Labor & Public Employees Committee and referred to the Appropriations Committee.
- [HB 6862](#) An Act Concerning Broadband Construction and The Prevailing Wage ensures that federal dollars used to build the state's broadband is well spent and support good jobs in the industry. It was JFS'd from the Labor & Public Employees Committee and is pending on the Senate Calendar.
- [SB 937](#) establishes a rebuttable Worker's Compensation presumption for firefighters diagnosed with cancer. It has been JF'd from the Labor & Public Employees Committee and is pending on the Senate Calendar.
- [SB 989](#) An Act Concerning Nursing Homes (1) requires air conditioning in each room at a nursing home, (2) requires notification of the State Ombudsman when a nursing home plans to involuntarily transfer or discharge a patient, (3) establishes a grant program for transportation of non-ambulatory nursing home residents to homes of family members, (4) makes changes in waiting list requirements for nursing homes, (5) requires transparent cost reporting by nursing homes, (6) establishes minimum

nursing home staffing levels, and (7) imposes stricter penalties for violations. It was JFS'd from the Human Services Committee and is pending on the Senate Calendar.

- **[SB 1035](#)** An Act Concerning Stop Work Orders broadens the labor commissioner's authority to issue stop work orders to include instances when a contractor or subcontractor knowingly or willfully pays an employee less than the prevailing wage required on a public works project and increases the civil penalty for violating a stop work order from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for each day that an order is violated. It also broadens the commissioner's investigative authority to cover complaints that a contractor or subcontractor violated the prevailing wage requirement and increases the fine for hindering an investigation of these complaints, or complaints about a nonpayment of wages or a failure to provide workers' compensation insurance coverage, from a \$150-\$250 fine, to a fine of at least \$1,000. It was JF'd by the Labor & Public Employees Committee and is pending on the Senate Calendar.
- **[SB 1067](#)** Act Concerning Adequate and Safe Health Care Staffing ensures adequate and safe health care staffing ratios in hospitals. It was JF'd by the Public Health Committee and is pending on the Senate Calendar.
- **[SB 1096](#)** An Act Concerning the Charter School Approval Process eliminates the process of the State Board of Education issuing an initial certificate of approval for a new charter school and establishes a charter school approval grant account to fund new charter schools. Despite objections of public education unions and several Education Committee members, it was JFS'd from the Education Committee and referred to the Appropriations Committee. It must pass before the Appropriations Committee April 28th JF deadline to remain alive.
- **[SB 1125](#)** An Act Concerning Apprenticeship Reporting Data requires each person sponsoring a Department of Labor (DOL)-registered apprenticeship program to annually submit the following information to DOL: (1) the minimum completion rate of the sponsor's apprentices; (2) the number of registered apprentices (a) currently participating in the program and (b) who have separated from the program since the date of their previous registration, or year to date for new sponsors; (3) the number of licensed journeypersons the sponsor currently employs; (4) the number of registered apprentices participating in the program who have advanced a year since the previous registration, or year to date for new sponsors; (5) the number of apprentices who have completed the sponsor's apprenticeship program since the previous registration, or year to date for new sponsors; and (6) the number of apprentices who completed the sponsor's program who (a) have been issued a Department of Consumer Protection occupational license and (b) are currently employed by the sponsor. It was JFS'd by the Labor & Public Employees Committee and is pending on the Senate Calendar.
- **[SB 1197](#)** An Act Concerning Workforce Development (1) allows boards of education to provide aerospace and aviation training to students through partnerships with local businesses, (2) allows the establishment of a dual enrollment or early college program related to health care, (3) allows students to be trained as paraeducators while in high school, (4) allows distribution of information concerning vocational agriculture and technical education and career programs to students in middle school, (5) requires the Auditors of Public Accounts to audit workforce development programs, (6) establishes a grant program for boards of education that includes registered pre-apprenticeship programs in the high school curriculum, (7) requires the expansion of dual credit and dual enrollment programs, and (8) requires the establishment of a working group to determine the feasibility of developing an aerospace advanced manufacturing high school. It was JFS'd from the Education Committee and is pending on the Senate Calendar.

- [SB 1198](#) An Act Implementing The Recommendations Of The School Indoor Air Quality Working Group (1) by extending and expanding the charge of the school indoor air quality working group, (2) establishing the School Indoor Air Quality and HVAC Portal for the purpose of collecting and making available reports of inspections and evaluations of school indoor air quality and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, (3) increasing the amount of funding under the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system grant program, and (4) requiring the Commissioner of Public Health to establish an optimal thermal comfort range in school buildings and facilities. It was JFS'd by the Education Committee and is pending in the Offices of Legislative Research & Fiscal Analysis.

The Connecticut AFL-CIO is also working in coalition with allied organizations to advance:

- [HB 6859](#) An Act Concerning Predictable Scheduling requires certain employers to provide advanced notice to certain employees of such employees' work schedule. It has been JF'd from the Labor & Public Employees Committee and is pending on the House Calendar.
- [SB 1178](#) expands paid sick days to (1) cover all private-sector employers and employees, (2) broaden the range of family members employees may use leave for, (3) increase rate at which employees accrue leave, (4) broaden reasons employees may use leave, and (5) increase the maximum number of hours an employee may accrue. It has been JFS'd and is pending on the Senate Calendar.\
- The Government Administration & Elections Committee JF'd three bills with varying approaches to implement **early voting** that was authorized by constitutional amendment in the 2022 election:
 - [HB 5004](#) establishes 14-day early voting period and 4-day early voting period for special elections.
 - [SB 1057](#) establishes 10-day early voting period and 4-day early voting period for special elections.
 - [SB 1064](#) establishes 14-day early voting period and 4-day early voting period for special elections.

They all are expected to be referred to the Appropriations Committee for further review and negotiation.

SEBAC Arbitration Award

The House and Senate both overwhelmingly ratified an arbitration award providing premium pay to the state's frontline workers for the essential services they delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each chamber voted by resolution: [HR 26](#) and [SR 26](#).

State Budget

Governor Lamont delivered his [FY 2023-2025 biennium budget proposal](#) to the General Assembly in February. The \$50.5 billion, 2-year budget spends 3.5% over current levels in the first year and provides a 1.8% spending increase in the second year. It is \$57.4M under the spending cap in FY 2024 and \$405.3M under the spending cap FY 2025.

The Appropriations Committee is expected to pass their own spending proposal next week. The Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee has until April 27th to pass a revenue package. After that, negotiations will begin between the Governor's Office and legislative leaders on a final budget package. A final biennium budget must pass before the General Assembly adjourns at midnight on June 7th.

Actions/Upcoming Events

- [Email legislators and urge them to support SB 938](#) which provides unemployment benefits to striking workers.
- [Email legislators and urge them to support HB 6881](#) to empower and invest in paraeducators.
- Join us for [Workers' Equity Agenda Lobby Day](#) on One Fair Wage, Paid Sick Days & Predictable Scheduling. Wednesday, April 19th at 9 AM, Legislative Office Building Room 2A
- Join us for [Server For An Hour in Stamford](#) – April 21st at 12:30 PM at InThai Restaurant in Stamford to bring awareness to SB 1177 which eliminates the subminimum wage.
- Look out for Paraeducator Roundtable Discussion – Date TBD
- Look out for Paraeducator Lobby Day – Date TBD
- Turn out for a May Day Action to march from Bushnell Park to the State Capitol in support of predictable scheduling and HUSKY for All legislative proposals, at 11 AM on May 1st.
- Turn out for [Recovery For All's Equity Can't Wait Budget Rally](#) – May 17th at 6 PM at State Capitol.

Watch your e-mail boxes for the Connecticut AFL-CIO's weekly bill report, which is delivered every Friday morning during the legislative session!