

Dear Connecticut Legislator,

Connecticut has faced unprecedented challenges over the past year. The issues faced by our state's business community are like nothing many—particularly smaller employers—have ever confronted.

There is much to be proud of in the way employers navigated and overcame these challenges. Our state was at the forefront of developing vaccines. Our businesses retooled to make personal protective equipment. We spent countless hours and resources to ensure our workplaces were safe for workers and customers, so that we could continue to provide the products and services needed for others to continue their lives.

Connecticut's employers are now responsible for a projected \$1 billion in federal loans to ensure that every unemployment benefit is paid out to those who lost their jobs through no fault of their own—including those who would not typically qualify for benefits.

It is expected to take years for Connecticut's economy to fully recover from the pandemic. There are 121,500 fewer jobs in this state than there were a year ago. Despite every effort, thousands of our small businesses permanently closed their doors, and many more continue to struggle.

While our state's business community appreciates the financial lifelines that both the state and federal government provided, major challenges remain as we look to the future. Further assistance is necessary, but more important to our business climate is stability.

During last fall's elections, candidates universally voiced support for Connecticut businesses and the removal of barriers to job creation and economic growth. All recognized the critical need to come together to rebuild Connecticut.

However, some policies currently under consideration will increase costs for small businesses, create barriers to job growth, impose greater uncertainty and lack of consumer confidence, and unnecessarily hamper Connecticut's economic recovery.

How can Connecticut businesses and our economy recover when faced with legislation like the following?

- **HB 6537:** Requires Connecticut's smallest businesses, rather than those with 50 or more employees, to incur the cost of providing paid sick leave for all workers.

- **SB 658:** Requires employers to recall laid off employees in order of seniority, ignoring factors like productivity, skill level, attendance, and disciplinary history.
- **SB 668:** Penalizes employers if they adjust employee shifts for any reason without 14 days notice. Also requires employers to ask all employees about desired hours and shifts, and verify they are meeting these requests before hiring new employees.
- **HB 6475:** Outsources the power of the attorney general to third parties to file claims against businesses, imposing massive new financial penalties and allowing them to undermine legitimate contracts to further their personal and political goals and financial self-interest.
- **SB 906:** Invalidates noncompete agreements for all hourly employees and all salaried employees making less than \$93,000, exposing Connecticut employers to the loss of confidential information and proprietary data.
- **HB 6380:** Requires equal pay for comparable work rather than equal pay for equal work, undermining the ability to pay employees based on merit.
- **HB 6383:** Imposes daily fines on businesses that relocate or reduce their phone or computer-based customer service operations without providing 100 days notice to the state.
- **HB 6536:** Imposes \$1,000 penalties on businesses that don't reimburse employees for any expense the employee believes to be necessary to facilitate working from home.
- **HB 6474:** Requires employers to conduct individualized assessments before rejecting job applicants with a criminal history, and then opens those employers to claims of discrimination by providing no guidance on the parameters of that assessment.
- **HB 6478:** Creates a presumption that an employee who contracts COVID-19 during the pandemic contracted it in the workplace, regardless of where they actually contracted the virus, resulting in a 400% increase of benefits for partial permanent disabilities.
- **HB 6595 & SB 1002:** Identical bills that increase the cost of workers' compensation by creating a presumption that any employee who contracts COVID-19 during the pandemic did so in the workplace; requires employers to rehire individuals exclusively based on time of service; and requires businesses to incur the costs of 80 hours of paid sick leave for employees and provide unemployment benefits above what certain individuals earned.

We all endured hardship this last year. The undersigned organizations, representing a significant number of employers from across the state, ask that you work with us to help Connecticut emerge from this pandemic stronger than before. In the remaining weeks of this legislative session, we ask that you please do no harm.

Please be our partners as we work to rebuild Connecticut. Please oppose the bills listed above.

Respectfully,

- Associated Builders & Contractors, Connecticut Chapter
- Avon/Canton Chamber of Commerce
- Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce
- CBIA
- Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce
- Cheshire Chamber of Commerce
- Connecticut Alarm & Systems Integrators Association
- Connecticut Assisted Living Association
- Connecticut Franchisee Association
- Connecticut Food Association
- Connecticut Heating & Cooling Contractors Association
- Connecticut Lodging Association
- Connecticut Nursery & Landscape Association
- Connecticut Restaurant Association
- Connecticut Retail Merchants Association
- Connecticut River Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Connecticut Spa & Pool Association
- Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce
- Greater New Britain Chamber of Commerce
- Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut
- Home Care Association of America-Connecticut
- Independent Electrical Contractors of New England
- Insurance Association of Connecticut
- Lumber Dealers Association of Connecticut
- Madison Chamber of Commerce

- Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce
- Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Motor Transport Association of Connecticut
- National Federation of Independent Business
- New England Convenience Store & Energy Marketers Association
- Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce
- Northwest Chamber of Commerce
- Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce
- The Southington Chamber of Commerce
- Tolland County Chamber of Commerce
- Utility Contractors Association of Connecticut
- Waterbury Regional Chamber
- Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce
- Windham Region Chamber of Commerce