

Testimony of Anna Cruz

Re. Layoffs at the DOL

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Sept. 28, 2015

---

Good morning. Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, members of the Labor Committee. My name is Anna Cruz. I am the President of AFSCME Local 478, representing the clerical staff that work in state offices from the New York border up into New Haven.

I want to thank you for holding this hearing regarding the recent budget cuts at the state Department of Labor.

We had --- members who received layoff notices because of the budget cuts at the DOL. I suspect as the office consolidations continue with Hamden and Bridgeport, we will have more members who need to move offices.

Receiving a pink slip is terrifying. I'm glad that our union was able to work with OLR, DAS, and DOL, to help the majority of employees who have gone through this process find other positions in state service. That is a big relief to the individuals and their families.

However, it still leaves 95 less employees in the state DOL. Our members who worked at the DOL before the layoff notices were already working hard to keep up with the demand for services. I worry that with fewer staff, there will be a strain on all DOL services.

In my day job I work at Housatonic Community College. Every day, I see students who are taking classes to help make themselves more marketable for potential employers. These students need a robust Department of Labor; one that is local and able to help them as they navigate the pathway from school to employment.

I hope that this committee can help to make sure we have an effective and efficient workforce development system.