



Testimony of
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Connecticut Department of Labor Job Center Layoffs and Reorganization
Labor and Public Employees Committee

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Good afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is John DiSette and as President of the Administrative and Residual Employees Union (A&R), I am proud to represent more than 3,000 dedicated state employees who work in every single state agency holding over 267 unique job titles, including Elevator Inspectors, Accountants, Tax Examiners and Attorneys. On their behalf, I thank you for holding this public hearing today.

One hundred fifty of our members are employed at the Department of Labor (DOL), providing vital public services to Connecticut residents in between jobs and facing personal financial hardship. Eight of my fellow members have been directly impacted by the recently announced Job Center outsourcing and subsequent layoffs. They have been informed that their tenure at DOL will end on October 15. While eight of my members will receive layoff notices, up to 20 will be directly impacted due to the way the agency has chosen to administer the layoffs.

At DOL, our members are on the revenue generating side of unemployment benefits. It is the A&R members who audit the Unemployment Insurance Tax submissions in the state and it is through their efforts that Connecticut is assured that the UI Tax laws are properly adhered to. They are responsible for the funds that support the entire unemployment system. If they are no longer able to secure and account for these funds, how can we make sure the public gets the assistance they need?

My fellow employees are career professionals with significant expertise, institutional knowledge and efficiency who are being subjected to a massive shift of duties and reassignments for lower pay. Make no mistake, my fellow employees serve a vital role in the UI system and these layoffs will not change the fact that the demands on this division will continue, despite the layoffs. The agency will simply try to extract savings

from 20 individuals by renaming their job titles while expecting the same workloads to be achieved.

The decision by the Malloy Administration to reduce and outsource services at DOL will have direct and immediate impacts on job seekers, as well as the longer term effects on the UI system's ability to generate the necessary revenues. The difficulties they create will not stop there, as the workplace chaos caused by layoffs of veteran staff has the potential to continue well into the future. The emotional reverberations throughout the workplace are an inevitable consequence of such a disruption.

We urge the Administration and the General Assembly to review the alternatives to layoffs. The State of Connecticut has the ability and authority to bridge the agency budget gap. It is not a long-term, systemic problem. It is possible for the agency, along with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and the Comptroller's office, to create a solution that prevents the chaotic circumstances that the state is about to incur.

Thank you for your time. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.