

**The CT Low Wage Employer Advisory Board Meeting**  
January 11, 2017 – 3:00 P.M. - Conference Rooms A&B  
Connecticut Department of Labor, Wethersfield, Connecticut

**Minutes**

**Members present:** Co-Chair James Bhandary-Alexander, Stanley McMillen, Merrill Gay, Helene Figueroa, Susan Coleman, Kurt Westby, Deborah Schwartz, Monica Morneau and Jennifer Putetti. **A quorum of members present was reached.**

**Members absent:** Paul Lavoie, Michael Seid, Merle Berkle-Schlessel and Eddie Stephens.

**Other Attendees:** CT Department of Labor (DOL) staff Michael Bartley and Tracy Andruskiewicz.

**Welcome and opening remarks:** Co-Chair Bhandary-Alexander welcomed his fellow Board Members and convened the meeting at 3:05 P.M.

**Review and approval of the November 9, 2017 Board Minutes:** Co-Chair Bhandary-Alexander entertained a motion by Helene Figueroa to approve the minutes. Stanley McMillen seconded the motion. **There being no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

**Presentation by CT Department of Labor Attorney Heidi Lane on the Freedom of Information Laws as they pertain to the Board and its Members:** Co-Chair Bhandary-Alexander announced that the presentation will not take place at this meeting, but will be re-scheduled to a future Board meeting.

The Co-Chair asked Board members if there were any additions to the meeting agenda. There were no additions, but Helene Figueroa asked what happened after the Board's December 1, 2016 report was submitted to the Governor. The Co-Chair indicated the Report was e-mailed to Legislative Leaders and State Commissioners, but he has not received any feedback. As a result of the Report, Merrill Gay asked if a bill had been introduced in the Legislature to raise the Minimum Wage. The Co-Chair indicated that Senator Looney had introduced such a bill. Kurt Westby added that the bill is a "place holder" with no specific language as of yet.

**Open discussion for Members:** Co-Chair Bhandary-Alexander asked the Board Members for possible subject matter topics and speakers for future meetings.

- Co-Chair Bhandary-Alexander indicated that Michael Seid suggested the following topics; Job Training and Education.
- Stanley McMillen mentioned the Equal Pay for Equal Work as a complement to the Minimum Wage and noted that Massachusetts recently passed such a bill that Connecticut should consider. He also proposed having the Director of the Connecticut Association of Human Services (CAHS) speak to the Board at a future meeting.
- Helene Figueroa mentioned “Care for Kids” being closed to new families and the great demand it places on the system. She would like to focus on the Care Giving professions traditionally seen as women’s work. Helene added that these jobs don’t create wealth, but allow for wealth to happen.
- Debra Schwartz proposed a speaker on the broader impact of the “Caregiver” crisis.
- Jennifer Putetti proposed speakers on transportation, re-entry, and the general barriers faced by people. She added that the Board may want to consider bringing in David Radcliffe to speak on the “Working Cities” program in Boston.
- Susan Coleman expressed her concern about the general fragmentation of the State’s social services delivery system, and advocated for a single application for all benefits.
- Merrill Gay expressed concern about people having to apply to the Department of Social Services for some benefits and then apply a second time for other benefits. He added that systems are intentionally hard to access. He also mentioned the CAHS online eligibility calculator as a viable tool in conjunction with an easy program application.
- Kurt Westby recommended the Board take a look at the article from the 2015 UC Berkeley Labor Center publication, “The High Cost of Low Wages.” He found it to be very informative. The link can be found on the Board’s Webpage.
- Other topics; child care, wage and hour enforcement, information on all benefit cliffs, what are the benefits and income thresholds, where are the opportunities for improvement in the social services delivery system and can the Board zero in on specific industries and their impact of low wages?

Co-Chair Bhandary-Alexander said he would like the Board to consider adding another Co-chair and that interested members should e-mail him. It was also discussed and agreed that future Board meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of each month.

**Public Comment:** There were no members of the public present.

**Adjourn:**

After Co-Chair Bhandary-Alexander thanked the Board, he entertained a motion by Kurt Westby and seconded by Susan Coleman to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. **The Board adjourned at 4:00 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Bartley  
CT Department of Labor