

March 15, 2010

CITY OF HARTFORD
COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL
550 Main Street, Room 208
Hartford, CT 06103

Re: School Bus Drivers and Monitors Need Livable Wages to
Support their Own Families

Members of the City Council;

My name is Patricia Gaskin, and I am a school bus monitor in Hartford. I'm also a city resident and a taxpayer, and I'm employed by Logisiticare, one of the companies contracted by the school district to provide student transportation services.

I am submitting this statement in favor of improving the City of Hartford's Living Wage Law.

Although the living wage ordinance has raised standards for school bus drivers and monitors, we believe it needs to be strengthened. I was here last summer to share our concerns, and the reality for many workers hasn't changed since then. **Too few can afford to live in the city where they work.**

Working as a school bus monitor is more than just a job -- it's a real public service. The kids I supervise are like family. I watch them grow up every year. I have 14 years in experience with this district; 9 years with Logisiticare and 5 years for the previous contractor.

As a veteran employee, I'm able to secure enough bus routes to work about 25 hours during an average week. Many of my newer, less experienced co-workers are limited to sometimes less than 10 hours a week.

I'm a single mom raising 2 kids. My son is 19, and I'm giving him all the help I can as long as he is still getting his education. My daughter is 11, and it will be several more years before she is able to fend for herself.

Even with 25 hours a week, it's hard to make ends meet. I've taken on second jobs to supplement my income, but that keeps me away from my most important job, which is raising my own children.

I know it is even harder for the many monitors and school bus drivers who are limited to fewer hours.

After our Union was able to get our employers to recognize the city's Living Wage Law four years ago, the situation certainly improved. But we have a long way to go.

That's one reason why we are pleased that the Living Wage Task Force recently proposed a commission to provide community oversight. It's important that as workers and taxpayers we know that Hartford's living wage law does what it's supposed to.

When the proposed new Living Wage Ordinance is presented to the full City Council, I urge you to pass it. **Workers in our city need truly livable wages so they can afford to stay here in Hartford without being a burden on local taxpayers.**

Patricia Gaskin

School Bus Monitor, Hartford Public Schools/Logisticare, Inc.
President, Chapter 1109, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001

cc: Members, Executive Council, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001

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