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**Written Testimony
Comptroller Kevin Lembo
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Concerning

**H.B. 5460: AN ACT CONCERNING MINIMUM EMPLOYEE WAGES FOR PROVIDERS
OF STATE-CONTRACTED HUMAN SERVICES**

Good afternoon, Sen. Moore, Rep. Abercrombie, Sen. Markley, Rep. Case and Members of the Human Services Committee:

Thank you for an opportunity to express my support for House Bill 5460, An Act Concerning Minimum Employee Wages for Providers of State-Contracted Human Services.

This legislation seeks to require that providers of state-contracted human services pay employees a minimum of \$15 per hour in order to provide greater economic security to Connecticut families.

Without the sacrifices and hard work of so many working families in Connecticut, our businesses and our entire economy could not function. This is especially true for those who provide human services that Connecticut's most vulnerable populations depend on for health and other essential care.

So many great employers recognize the benefits of valuing their workforce – in increased productivity and a positive workplace culture. However, for the sake of our greater economy and basic quality of life, we have a responsibility to ensure that workers are paid fairly and reasonably.

The state has a responsibility to ensure that agencies with whom it contracts to provide much needed social services are paying a fair wage to the frontline workers responsible for delivering care to many of our most vulnerable populations. At the same time, the state must keep up its end of the bargain. Many of the state's private social service providers are non-profits with limited budgets. In order for them to meet this mandate they will require adequate state funding.

I urge your support and thank the Committee for raising this bill.