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TESTIMONY ON HB#0136 - FAVORABLE

Employment Standards, Prevailing Wage, and Living Wage – Employer Adverse Actions - Prohibition

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0193, Employment Standards, Prevailing Wage, and Living Wage – Employer Adverse Actions - Prohibition

My Jewish faith teaches that there are Jewish Ethics that govern the relationships between employers and employees. HB#0136 closely mirrors that ethical framework in creating a climate of moral treatment that governs labor relations.

In the article “Jewish Employee-Employer Relations” (<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/jewish-employee-employer-relations/>) the dimensions of employer’s conduct is discussed.

While making certain demands on workers, the bulk of Jewish labor law imposes obligations on employers. This emphasis on the responsibilities of employers reflects an understanding of the essential power imbalance between employers and employees, as well as an internalization of the Exodus narrative. Often cited within discussions of labor law is the biblical verse, “they are my servants” (Leviticus 25:43), understood by the rabbis to imply “and not servants to servants.” The experience of slavery and redemption instills within the lawmakers a wariness about any situation in which one person might, de facto, become the servant of another.

The essence of the proposed bill is to create an environment in which employer conduct towards employees is restricted in the imposition of a negative outcome for an employee’s lawful actions. It will add certainty to employees’ exercise of their employment rights without fear of reprisals.

HB0136 is a common-sense application of regulations on how we treat the imbalance created when an employer does not respect their employees’ rights. It enforces the safety of an employee whose actions vis-à-vis their employers could be met with negative consequences on their continued employment. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0136.**