

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-358 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE RETENTION OF SERVICE CONTRACT
Title: WORKERS.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/3/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this bill is to expand a present statute under which businesses that take over contracts to provide food and beverage services at Bradley Airport are required to retain their predecessors' employees for at least 90 days. This bill would expand the covered employees to include many large office buildings and apartments, schools, hospitals, universities, shopping malls, data centers, and more, as long as the workers in questions maintenance, food preparation, transport, healthcare, or security roles.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The substitute language, LCO 3394, reduces the previous employment time required for workers to qualify for the protections under this bill from the preceding six months to the preceding 90 days before ownership changed.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dante Bartolomeo, Commissioner, CT Department of Labor: Mr. Bartolomeo testified stating that SB 358 expands CGS 31-57g to include employment protections for certain service workers. This bill will allow an individual to file a complaint with the Labor Commissioner and upon receipt of the complaint a hearing must be held. Mr. Bartolomeo states the CTDOL would like the language amended to give CTDOL discretion on the question on whether a hearing should be held when a complaint is received. This is due to such hearing being labor intensive and a fiscal impact will occur on the agency as additional legal staff would be needed. CTDOL would also like the effective date of section 10 to be

amended to July 1, 2027, to ensure that CTDOL Wage and Workplace Standards division staff are trained and in place if this bill does proceed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Corey Geisman, Executive Director, SEIU CT State Council: Submitted testimony in support stating that SB 358 would strengthen CT worksites by reducing job displacement and ensuring stability. The bill would ensure workers receive advanced notice of employer restructuring and prevent abrupt terminations, by ensuring there is a transition timeline.

Rochelle Palache, 32BJ SEIU: Submitted testimony in support explaining that their members are predominantly immigrants, people of color and work tirelessly to improve job standards for industries that often have low wages. SB 358 would protect these skilled workers from arbitrary termination and give them a chance to prove themselves. They state worker retention laws would be a minimal burden on employers and only reinforce the existing industry standard to retain the incumbent workforce.

Ed Hawthorne, President, Connecticut AFL-CIO: Submitted testimony in support stating that when contractors change the workers have no legal right to keep their job. Employees who have worked for years can be displaced overnight with no warning. If they are kept it could mean losing wages or healthcare benefits. This results in harm to workers, their families and harms the local economy. The bill allowing for a transition period of 90 days would ensure workers can prepare for any change in contract.

Elizabeth Crespo, School Bus Driver, CSEA SEIU Local 2001: Supports the bill if it is amended. They state they are a school bus driver for 12 years and has broken up fights, helped kids who were crying, and once helped a student who was having a medical emergency. They state experience matters for the job to keep everyone safe. When a city changes a contractor, they live in fear they may lose their jobs due to no fault of their own. They state that if drivers are not included and protected under the bidding process then they can be dismissed. Due to this they would like to include as a covered location a property carrier as defined in CT gen Stat 14-212 where employees are performing student transportation or related activities. Along with this they would like to add School transportation to the definition of service worker. If these changes are implemented, then it would give workers in their industry a 90-day transition period that would mean stability and safety.

Manuel Estrada, 32BJ: Submitted testimony in support stating that one of the most common labor campaigns they run is when a cleaning contractor is replaced, and those workers might lose their jobs. Under current CT law there are no protections for those workers jobs. Many of those workers are living paycheck to paycheck and rely on the job to provide health insurance to their families. They state that this bill would bring protections to those workers that would bring stability to them.

Prince Gresham, SkyChefs worker at PHX Airport, UNITE HERE Local 11: : Mr. Gresham is in support of the bill because he understands the struggles of workers who have no protections against losing their jobs. He explains that the past six months have been very difficult for him and his co-workers when they were laid off. He says that the company he worked for did not hire anyone back at first causing him to file a grievance with the company before they rehired him. About a month ago he says that things went south again when his

company was taken over by new management. He claims that he and his coworkers were send letters saying that that they would have to complete “onboarding steps” to keep their jobs along with potential changes in benefits and policies. He states that during this time he did not know had had get is groceries or pay rent.

Ciro Gutierrez, SEIU Local 32BJ: Submitted testimony in support stating that when buildings change contractors' workers can lose there jobs even if they have great performance records. They state a worker can wake up one day being unemployed due to contracts being changed. When a contract is changed it can result in immediate income loss and loss of health insurance. The bill would allow for workers to be retained for 90 days to allow for proper performance evaluation.

Christine Kane, School Bus Driver, CSEA SEIU Local 2001: Submitted testimony offering comments on SB 358. They state that they are a school bus driver and member of SEIU local 2001. As a bus driver they must know the kids well, intervene if they need help and make sure they get home safely. Without worker retention laws every time a city puts their transportation contracts out for bus drivers like them could be replaced by a new contractor overnight even though they have worked there for decades. They state on behalf of their school bus workers they as the committee to make two changes to the proposed worker retention law. 1 is to include as a “Covered location,” “A property of a carrier as defined in CT Gen Stat § 14-212 where employees are performing student transportation or related activities.” 2 is to add "School transportation" to the definition of “Service worker”. This way bus workers would be covered under the protections of this bill.

Marta Martell, Former SkyChefs worker in PHX, UNITE HERE Local 11: Ms. Martell submitted testimony in support of Hb 5003. She states she worked in Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport in Arizona for two years as a porter and dishwasher. However, her and their coworkers' lives were thrown into turmoil when Skychefs lost a contract with American Airlines and was told 200 of the workers would be laid off. The new company GAT/SkyCafe refused to commit to rehiring them even though they had years of experience and provided excellent service. They along with their Union Unite Here, elected officials and their investors, pleaded with them to let them keep their jobs. Instead, Atlantic Street sold SkyCafe to a new company PrimeFlight that is owned by two private equity firms Sterling Group and Capital Meridian Partners. A confusing letter was sent saying to complete onboarding steps but gave no details or instructions. What they understood was that once again their job was at stake. She was able to get a job with PrimeFlights new subcontractor Aramark but only after filling a grievance with local 11 to get their job back with back pay. Many of her other coworkers were not so lucky. This bill will give workers like her 90 days of stability instead of panic when a new contractor takes over.

Elizabeth Nieves, School Bus Driver-CSEA SEIU Local 2001, CSEA SEIU Local 2001 and Betsy Mercano, School Bus Driver-CSEA SEIU Local 2001: Supports the bill if it is amended. They state they are a school bus driver for 12 years and has broken up fights, helped kids who were crying, and once helped a student who was having a medical emergency. They state experience matters for the job to keep everyone safe. When a city changes a contractor, they live in fear they may lose their jobs due to no fault of their own. They state that if drivers are not included and protected under the bidding process then they can be dismissed. Due to this they would like to include as a covered location a property carrier as defined in CT gen Stat 14-212 where employees are performing student

transportation or related activities. Along with this they would like to add School transportation to the definition of service worker. If these changes are implemented, then it would give workers in their industry a 90-day transition period that would mean stability and safety.

Xochitl Ramirez, Custodian, 32BJ SEIU: Submitted testimony in support stating that their mother is a long-time custodian and was abruptly let go when a new contractor took over. She had dedicated 14 years in that job yet was let go with little notice. They state that is why the bill is needed as it would allow workers 90 days when a new contractor comes in.

Travis Woodward, President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001: Mr. Woodward is in support of the bill. He claims that requiring employers to notify employees of changes in management is a simple approach to creating consistency for workers. He adds that the bill helps reduce sudden job displacement, turnover, and loss of insurance and benefits. Mr. Woodward would also like the committee to consider making two changes; Include as a "Covered location," "A property of a carrier as defined in CT Gen Stat § 14-212 where employees are performing student transportation or related activities."; and Add "School transportation" to the definition of "Service worker".

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Paul Amarone, Senior Policy Director, CBIA: Opposes Sb 358 as they state it would expand CT's existing service worker retention law to cover a wider range of locations such as large residential buildings, office complexes, schools, hospitals, utilities, warehouses, and colleges. It would require successor contractors retain existing worker for at least 90 days and limits terminations in that time to just cause. They believe that this bill would impose new mandates on CT employers that would significantly increase liability and reduce operational flexibility. In addition to this the contractor threshold goes from 10 employees to 2 employees which would affect small businesses

CHA, Connecticut Hospital Association: Submitted testimony in opposition stating hospitals invest in there workforce and they go through financial challenges. They state SB 358 would expand CT's workers retention laws to such places as nursing homes, assisted living communities and hospitals. It would require successor contractors to retain workers for 90 days and removes flexibility related to performance. This would make it more difficult for hospitals to hire and be another burden driving up costs of care.

Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge CT – RI: Submitted testimony in opposition stating the bill would extend to nursing homes and assisted living communities. That would make it more difficult for them to hire or change contractors. They also state they have not seen any need for this proposal.

Michael W. Shea, Executive Director, Connecticut Airport Authority: Mr. Shea is in opposition of the bill. He states while the CAA is supportive of the intent of the bill it believes that it includes language that would impact the process of transitioning to a new service contractor at their airports. He explains that the bill will require the successor contractor to grant workers under the previous contractor employment for 90 days or more. This would limit the abilities of the successor contractor to take actions against employees for any types

of violations. He claims that the CAA is concerned that the bill could make their airlines unattractive for airline and cargo growth because it could cause concessionaires and other private entities to shy away from investing in their airports. He wants to make it clear that they like the intention of the bill, but they feel there is an alternative way to go about it.

Reported by: Lawrence Sanchez & Olivia Buczak Date: 3/27/2026