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Testimony of

Kate Dias

Connecticut Education Association

Before the Labor Committee

HB 6860 An Act Extending Connecticut Premium Pay to Certain Essential Workers

March 9, 2023

Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, Representative Ackert, Senator Sampson, and esteemed members of the Labor Committee. My name is Kate Dias, and I am president of the Connecticut Education Association, representing more than 40,000 active and retired teachers from over 150 school districts across the state.

HB 6860 An Act Extending Connecticut Premium Pay to Certain Essential Workers

CEA supports HB 6860, which will extend the premium pay program available to certain private-sector essential workers to a larger group of elderly individuals and those with high-risk medical conditions.

However, the extension of this program should remind legislators that similar hero pay or COVID relief funds have yet to be put in place for local public-sector essential workers, including teachers. CEA believes this bill should be coupled with a program compensating essential local public-sector workers, like teachers. We believe this compensation could be funded from surplus and come in the form of direct funding or additional pension credit.

CEA supports HB 6860 and believes that it is time to recognize all workers deemed essential through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration and your tireless work on this committee.