

March 22, 2009

GENERAL ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Senator Gayle Slossberg, Co-Chair
Representative James Spallone, Co-Chair
Room 2200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Support for SENATE BILL 1144: AN ACT CONCERNING FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES AND TELECOMMUTING OPTIONS FOR STATE EMPLOYEES

Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone and Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement in support of Section 4 of Senate Bill 1144, and for raising this important legislation.

My name is Lynn Coda-Klein and I have been a State employee for over 22 years, most of that time at the Department of Information Technology (DoIT). I am a member of the Connecticut State Employees Association, SEIU Local 2001 and I would like to inform the committee about the technology available from DoIT which allows State employees to work from home.

Many of us who are "on call" 24/7, work from home when there is an off-hour problem. Because this technology exists, it would not add to the cost of implementing telecommuting for State employees.

Since the 1990s, DoIT has been using Virtual Private Network technology, also known as VPN. VPN works in the following way: VPN client software is installed on a home computer or a state issued laptop, then this software is run. The employee will be issued a physical key, which displays a number that is to be entered on the login screen, along with a User ID and a PIN.

VPN is very secure. In the many years that DoIT has been using this technology, we have not had a security breach. This is very significant since there are approximately 70 agencies utilizing VPN, with nearly 4,000 keys issued to date. The number on the key changes every 60 seconds, so even if someone was to look over a user's shoulder, they would not have the newest key number. After 3 failed login attempts, the key automatically becomes disabled.

Once the employee has logged into the system, their login ID identifies their profile, which controls what machines they can access and what information they can see. This is no different than when the employee logs in from the computer they use at their worksite.

VPN has allowed employees to log on from home to quickly support 24/7 systems that are critical to public safety, such as the COLLECT system. Another benefit to telecommuting is when the Governor closes State offices for inclement weather, productivity would not be lost. It allows us to deliver quality public services in a quick, efficient and consistent manner.

While there is concern on how to manage workers that telecommute, I feel that this concern is unfounded since there are thousands of State employees who do this when "on call." Many states, like California, Minnesota, and Virginia, allow, even encourage, their workers to telecommute.

Governor Rell believes telecommuting would be beneficial. In a letter dated July 10, 2008 to Robert Rinker, the Executive Director of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, she stated that telecommuting is a way to increase efficiency and productivity, reduce traffic congestion and benefit the environment.

Currently, the State of Connecticut encourages businesses to allow their employees to telecommute. The State should set the example for businesses and allow it's employees, whose job duties allow, to telecommute.

We know that the members of the GAE Committee are working very hard this session to look at the way that State Government does business and to promote new efficiencies and improved services. Let us change the way the State does business by passing this bill as a way to reduce waste, increase efficiency and allow a more direct delivery of critical state services.

We respectfully suggest that improved telecommuting options be a critical component of your work, and we look forward to working cooperatively with the General Assembly and with the Administration on this proposal.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of Section 4 of Senate Bill 1144.

Lynn Coda-Klein

Information Technology Analyst, CT Department of Information Technology
CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Legislative Action Committee Co-Chair

CC: Members, Connecticut General Assembly GAE Committee
CSEA SEIU Local 2001 Executive Council Members
CSEA SEIU Local 2001 Legislative Action Committee Members