

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

March 6, 2008

H.B. No. 5584 - 'AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR THE INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM'

Good afternoon Chairman LeBeau, Chairman Berger, and distinguished members of the committee. My name is Justin Kelly I am the Director of Human Resources at Gyrus ACMI in Stamford, CT. Gyrus ACMI designs and manufactures minimally invasive surgical instruments in our CT facility. I am here today to testify in support of Bill Number 5584.

The challenges that Gyrus ACMI has faced having a facility in Southwestern Connecticut are many, including the high cost of labor and overhead, an aging workforce, and a difficult recruiting environment with so many manufacturing organizations leaving the area. To remain competitive our business has had to react by pushing for a culture based on innovation and flexibility. It was, and still is, imperative that we have the ability to train our incumbent employees without the costs for the training outweighing the competitive benefits that the training provides.

Over the past two years we have worked closely with the Workplace to provide incumbent worker training for our employees. This training has been centered on Lean Manufacturing principles, designed to empower employees with the ability to affect positive change.

We have seen tangible results that have made our facility more competitive in the global marketplace. In a relatively short time frame we have been able to reduce our floor-space, increase productivity levels, eliminate waste from our processes, reduce inventory, and improve our ability to react more quickly to our customer demands. We were also recognized in 2007 as a Shingo Prize Bronze recipient in CT, which is an award given for excellence in Manufacturing. Without the funding assistance that we received these accomplishments would not have been possible.

Our facility has been through numerous ownership changes, including two within the last three years. The first reaction from the new owners has always been to explore the possibility of relocating the Stamford facility due to the factors I mentioned above. The training that we have been able to provide for our employees via the assistance from the Workplace has made a significant contribution to keeping our location here in CT. I have had numerous occasions where upper management has told me that without our aggressive training initiatives and improvements our facility would have most likely been relocated by now.

In closing, I would ask you to support H.B. 5584 as it is imperative for CT employers like Gyrus ACMI to maintain a globally competitive workforce. In the Healthcare field we have seen much of our competition moving to lower cost areas in the global marketplace, so it is essential for CT employers like us to continuously improve our processes through training and empowering our incumbent workforce. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.