



**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE JOINT HEARING OF THE  
COMMERCE COMMITTEE & HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
February 26, 2008**

*Karen J. Senich, Executive Director  
Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism*

**Testimony Regarding**

**House Bill 5510**

An Act Creating a Skilled Workforce for Connecticut's Film Industry

**House Bill 5509**

An Act Concerning the Development of a Film Curriculum

**House Bill 5585**

An Act Concerning Digital and Film Media

Arts  
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Senators LeBeau and Hartley, Representatives Berger and Willis and distinguished members of the Commerce and Higher Education Committees: my name is Karen J. Senich and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, whose mission is to preserve and promote all of Connecticut's cultural and tourism assets in order to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of the State. I appreciate the opportunity to testify regarding House Bills 5510, 5509 and 5585.

House Bills 5509 and 5510 address the need for a skilled workforce to fill the needs of our growing digital media and film production industries. As you know, since July 1, 2006, 64 productions – varying from feature films to commercials to television movies and documentaries – have been made to some degree in Connecticut. Since July 1, 2006, almost 300 productions have sought the assistance of our film office for location and production services. The inception of the tax credit program has brought Connecticut to the forefront – productions now consider Connecticut seriously as a location. By all accounts, this is only the beginning for Connecticut.

The Commission recognizes the need to develop its skilled workforce – in particular its skilled, union member workforce. To date, Connecticut has 129 union members who have collectively earned over \$3.5 million since July 1, 2006. We have many success stories of individuals earning their union card or being able to work without one. Connecticut needs to increase its workforce to stay competitive and to be able to accommodate more than one production at a time. As detailed in the earlier presentations, productions need to find a ready willing and able workforce for crew positions.

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Additionally, in order to put our own residents to work, we must prepare them. The Commission has been working and will continue to work with the Office of Workforce Competitiveness to assist in the development of programs to establish a skilled workforce, short and long term.

House Bill 5585 contemplates the continued support of the film industry by the State. The Commission currently has an on-line production guide that lists all of the available work force and vendors which a production may need. In response to feedback from the industry as well as our own constituents, the Commission is redesigning the guide, with assistance from the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, to make available the information needed by the production companies while continuing to showcase Connecticut residents and businesses. The Commission is creating a print piece to not market the state and explain the available incentives.

As I previously stated, since July 1, 2006, the Commission has assisted almost 300 productions of varying types and budgets. Many productions consider Connecticut as their location; however, not all come. Productions may spend weeks scouting locations and may even file an application with the Commission to be certified as an eligible production company and, in the end, may not actually make their production here. Once a production files for eligibility certification, that production becomes active in the tax credit program. Productions do not end up being made in Connecticut for various reasons – it could be budgetary, the desire of talent to work elsewhere or simply lack of a specific location.

In meetings with production companies, whether one on one or at seminars and workshops, certain concerns are repeated – liquidity of the credit, workforce and public disclosure of the information regarding their budgets and projects.

We are committed to informing, educating and marketing the state and the incentives to the industry and our residents. With six feature films coming in Connecticut, interest in developing the necessary infrastructure, including studios, and the relocation of the first digital animation production to the state this year, we believe that Connecticut's digital media and film industry will continue to grow. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.