

1

TESTIMONY

Higher Education and Commerce Joint Hearing

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

1:00 P.M. in Room 2A of the LOB

Speaker Amann

Good afternoon, Representatives Berger and Willis and Senators Lebeau and Hartley . I would like to thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to speak on an issue that energizes and excites me. The culmination of the Hollywood East vision. Surrounding states and those who compete with us for film projects are consistently wondering "What's Connecticut going to do next" This has been happening since the inception of the 30% tax credit for the film industry, which now also encompasses the digital media realm and accompanying infrastructure. When we began our endeavor to attract films and the movie industry here to Connecticut, we knew that it would take more work to maintain the industry and provide a sense of permanence. Now is that time.

Since the last legislative session I have put together a working group "The Hollywood East Task Force". The task force was chaired by Reps. Jeffrey Berger and Carlo Leone and included members of the film industry, educational institutions, labor union heads and legislators. Members were asked to submit reports on initiatives that would put Connecticut residents to work in this industry, which provides high-tech and well paying jobs. Through our work we understood that we need to develop an educational component that would train individuals on different levels, so that they could be labor ready. By different levels, I mean that we came to understand that different jobs in the industry

require different levels of training. Some of the training could be done within our technical high schools, while other jobs require a two- or four-year degree. What is really exciting about this though is the realization that the media industry and a younger work force go hand in hand. It is almost daily that we hear about the brain-drain and loss of youth in our state. This is not a complete solution, but it is a major first step to keeping our best and brightest in state. They can utilize the educational component, and then go straight to work here within the state at a good paying job.

Putting people to work within state boundaries is important not only to us, but also to those who come to our state to do work. The industry has too often had to go to New York to obtain properly trained workers and necessary equipment. This costs them extra money on everything from per diems to travel costs. Over the course of a couple of months of shooting, these daily costs begin to add up and make filming in Connecticut more expensive. Our affordability is our greatest marketing tool right now, it is important to keep it that way. The upcoming weeks and months will be critical in our efforts to sustain long-term industry growth. There is no better way to show the film industry that Connecticut is not resting on its laurels, than by passing a workforce bill in 2008, which will fuel continued growth.